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INSIDE TODAY

BUSINESS NEWS

MONEY BACK



President Barack Obama speaks at the opening session of the Forum on Modernizing Government, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010, in the South Court Auditorium in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House campus in Washington.

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SPORTS NEWS

NHL ROUNDUP



A woman wearing a wedding dress holds up a sign for Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby before an NHL hockey action between the Penguins and the Calgary Flames in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010.

Read more on Page A13



Price of a barrel
of petroleum

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Health care negotiators close in on deal

Read more on Page A4

U.S. takes charge in Haiti _ with troops, aid

JENNIFER LOVEN
AP White House
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama and the United States moved to take charge in earthquake-ravaged Haiti on Thursday, dispatching thousands of troops along with tons of aid to try to keep order as well as rescue the suffering in a country dysfunctional in the best of times.

Tested by the first large-scale humanitarian disaster of his presidency, Obama ordered a relief effort of historic proportions despite the strains it was sure to put on both the stretched U.S. budget and military forces fighting two wars. He pledged an initial \$100 million, with the likelihood of more later.

"The United States is providing a lot of the glue that is keeping people communicating and working together as we try to assert authority, reinstate the government and begin to do what governments have to do to rebuild," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said on Fox News Channel.

Continued on Next Page



Haiti quake aid snarled; up to 50,000 feared dead

By JONATHAN M. KATZ and TAMARA LUSH
Associated Press Writers

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Doctors and search dogs, troops and rescue teams flew to this devastated land of dazed, dead and dying people Thursday, finding bottlenecks everywhere, beginning at a main airport short on jet fuel and ramp space and without a control tower.

The international Red Cross estimated 45,000 to 50,000 people were killed in Tuesday's cataclysmic earthquake, based on information from the Haitian Red Cross and government officials. Worries mounted, meanwhile, about food and water for the survivors.

"People have been almost fighting for water," aid worker Fevil Dubien said as he distributed water from a truck in a northern Port-au-Prince

neighborhood.

From Virginia, from China, a handful of rescue teams were able to get down to work, scouring the rubble for survivors. In one "small miracle," searchers pulled a security guard alive from beneath the collapsed concrete floors of the U.N. peacekeeping headquarters, where many others were entombed.

But the silence of the dead otherwise was overwhelming in a city where uncounted bodies littered the streets in the 80-degree heat, and dust-caked arms and legs reached, frozen and lifeless, from the ruins. Outside the General Hospital morgue, hundreds of collected corpses blanketed the parking lot, as the grief-stricken searched for loved ones. Brazilian U.N. peacekeepers, key to city security, were trying to organize mass burials.

Continued on Page 8



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In this Nov. 13, 2006, file photo, then-President George W. Bush is greeted by former President Bill Clinton, right, before speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial on the National Mall in Washington. President Barack Obama has reached out to former Presidents Bush and Clinton to help with U.S. relief efforts in Haiti.

Associated Press

U.S. TAKE CHARGE

Continued from Front page

Aware of the steep political cost George W. Bush paid for an ineffective response to Hurricane Katrina's destruction of much of New Orleans, Louisiana, the Obama White House has labored to show intensive engagement by the president since immediately after the 7.0-magnitude quake struck the impoverished island on Tuesday. Details of evening Situation Room meetings, phone calls with world leaders and canceled events were being released almost hourly.

"I will not put up with any excuses for us not doing the very best in this time of tragedy," Obama pledged at the Capitol, making his third public comments on the topic in two days.

The president announced "the first waves" of the American response were in

place, with two search-and-rescue teams on the ground, Coast Guard cutters in port, the U.S. Southern Command in control of the airport and airlifts bringing in urgently needed supplies and ferrying out the injured.

The chief emphasis out of Washington was the huge amount of U.S. help that was still on the way: some half-dozen ships and 5,500 troops making their way across the Caribbean.

Seeking to pre-empt criticism, officials noted the difficulty of getting resources in as fast as they would like because of needed preparation time and then the barriers of damaged communications, roads, airport and port.

Obama acknowledged it would take hours "and in many cases days" to get the full U.S. contingent to Haiti.

The U.S. Federal Aviation



Maurice Cain, senior airman with the U.S. Air Force, unloads humanitarian supplies that arrived from Panama at the Toussaint Louverture international airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010. A 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti Tuesday.

Associated Press

Administration halted all civilian aid flights to Haiti, though not government ones. The Haitian government said there was no more room on ramps for planes to unload their cargo, and some planes on the ground did not have enough fuel to leave.

The role of heading the relief effort and managing the crisis quickly fell to the United States, for lack, in the short term at least, of any other capable entity.

The government of Haitian President Rene Preval was severely disabled, with the president's own residences damaged and the Parliament building collapsed along with other ministries and departments. In one sign

of difficult conditions and dearth of official Haitian activity, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Obama had tried twice, unsuccessfully, to get through to Preval.

The large United Nations mission in Haiti, some 9,000-strong, still was operating, with about 3,000 peacekeepers patrolling the still-calm streets of Port-au-Prince, the country's capital, population center and heart of earthquake damage. But U.N. abilities to respond aggressively to possible problems were hobbled as well. Its headquarters building was destroyed, and dozens of its personnel, including some leaders, were dead or missing,

leaving it in need of rescue help itself.

However, there was sensitivity in Washington to any impression the United States was taking over Haiti, a country that has seen dramatic American interventions before, not always to good effect, and is suspicious of involvement by its much larger and wealthier northern neighbor.

So Gibbs, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley and others emphasized that the United States was responding only as requested by the Haitian government, with the U.S. ambassador to Haiti, Kenneth Merten, in regular contact with Preval.

Aruba TODAY

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Immigration reformers see parallels in MLK's work

By DEEPTI HAJELA

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — After almost nine years, Nigerian immigrant Emakoji Ayikoye is now an American. The final step came at a naturalization ceremony, where he and about 100 others recited the citizenship oath.

But Thursday's ceremony was weighted with more symbolism than usual for the 32-year-old college math teacher. It was one of several being held nationwide in honor of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Another, on Friday in Atlanta, will feature a speech from his daughter Bernice King.

Honoring the slain civil rights leader via a naturalization ceremony makes perfect sense to Ayikoye. And around the country, immigration reform advocates also are connecting their efforts to the work of King and the civil rights movement, looking for inspiration and a way to gain support in hopes of passing legislation in 2010.

King would have turned 81 on Friday. The holiday honoring him is Monday.

It's not unusual for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to hold naturalization ceremonies around holidays such as July 4 or at places with ties to immigrant history such as Ellis Island. But the week of events honoring King is a first for the agency.

"When we greet new citizens into the United States we speak of the open opportunities that our country presents to everyone around the world who qualifies for the benefits our agency administers," said Alejandro Mayorkas, the USCIS director. "Martin Luther King helped define those hopes and opportunities for everyone."

Ayikoye said King "fought for the equality of people." He pointed out that the reform of immigration laws that allowed more people from all over the world to come to America took place as the civil rights movement was going on.

"His work paved the way for me to become a citizen," Ayikoye said. "Without him, there is absolutely no way I would become a citizen today."

The efforts of King and others in the

civil rights movement created a political atmosphere in the 1960s that helped those who were trying to change the country's immigration laws, said David Canton, associate professor of history at Connecticut College in New London.

"The whole '60s were about democracy and reform," he said.

Immigration laws at the time were extremely restrictive and were biased in favor of people from places such as northern Europe.

Those who wanted that changed "made people realize that it's not fair, it's not democratic," Canton said.

The current basic framework, that all countries get the same number of visas, was put into place through the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965.

Those advocates who are hoping for reform to come again this year, with changes including a path to citizenship for the nation's undocumented population, are still looking toward King.

In Oakland, Calif., the Black Alliance for Just Immigration invokes King's efforts to bring people together as it works to build support among blacks for immigration reform.

The group tries to make links between what blacks have faced and what immigrants face, said Gerald Lenoir, director of BAJI. "Even some of the migration experiences of African-Americans, coming from the South, leaving conditions of economic injustice and terrorism from both legal authorities and groups like the Ku Klux Klan, we see that same kind of movement in people across borders," he said.

In Houston, the Rev. Harvey Clemons Jr. wrote an editorial calling on people to follow King's guidance on reform, in terms of working toward a system that treats all who enter the United States with respect.

"Dr. King invoked the truth, the truth being that all humans ought to be treated with a certain dignity," Clemons told The Associated Press. "It would be natural for us to look to him as an example for fighting for a just cause." □



Tearful Dominican immigrant Rafael Perez, 61, of New York City, applauds after taking the oath of citizenship in New York, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010. He was among the 102 new citizens from 43 countries.

Associated Press

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Tentative tax deal marks health care breakthrough

By DAVID ESPO and SAM HANANEL

Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON – In a major breakthrough, union leaders bowed Thursday to White House demands for a new tax on high-cost health plans as part of landmark health care legislation taking final shape in intensive negotiations.

The tentative agreement on the tax, which included significant concessions by the administration, was disclosed as leading lawmakers set an informal timetable of Friday for an agreement on the health care bill that President Barack Obama made a top priority in taking office a year ago.

Democrats expressed the hope that the agreement would quickly open the way for progress on other key issues where House and Senate-passed bills differ, as well as attempts by the White House to squeeze additional financial concessions from drug makers, nursing homes and other health care providers.

On a separate issue, makers of generic drugs, backed by the White House and a senior congressional ally, sought to reduce the patent protection that pharmaceutical companies receive for their new-to-market biotech products.

The House and Senate bills both limit competition for 12 years.

The fast-paced events came as senior lawmakers went to the White House for the second straight day of bargaining over terms of a final compromise, and Obama arranged an appearance before the House Democratic rank-and-file in late afternoon Thursday in the Capitol complex.

The president wants legislation to expand health care to millions who lack it, crack down on insurance industry practices such as denial of benefits on the basis of pre-existing medical conditions and slow the growth of health care costs generally.

The president has told

lawmakers he wants the tax on high-cost plans included in the legislation to help rein in costs. But that position courted conflict with labor leaders who fear exposing their membership to higher taxes, as well as with House Democrats who omitted it from the legislation they initially passed.

The day's events underscored the urgency with which the White House and top Democrats were working, and the tentative agreement on a new tax on high-cost plans was the most prominent fruit of the effort.

"This was a very critical issue that had to be resolved, and I think it has been," said

Rep. Rob Andrews, D-N.J., who told reporters he had been briefed on the emerging agreement to impose a tax on costly insurance plans.

While not all details were set, it appeared the union leaders had backed down on their outright opposition to a new tax, and the White House had agreed to several concessions to mollify their concerns.

In a significant victory

for unions, the 40 percent excise tax would not apply to policies covering workers in collective bargaining agreements, state and local workers and members of voluntary employee benefit associations through Dec. 31, 2017.

Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., and others said the tax would apply to fewer plans than was the case in the Senate-passed bill and would exclude the value of dental and vision coverage. They added it would provide an exemption for residents of states where the cost of health care is particularly high, as well as for employees of high-risk professions.

A union official familiar with the details said the tentative agreement would raise the threshold on insurance policies subject to tax from \$8,500 in the Senate-passed bill to \$8,900 for singles and from \$23,000 to \$24,000 for family coverage. Even the new thresholds would be subject to adjustment if unexpected rises in health care occur by the time the

plan is effective, this official said.

Additionally, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told reporters that beginning in 2017, health plans covered by collective bargaining agreements would be permitted to seek coverage in insurance exchanges that would be set up under the bill to allow consumers to shop for coverage issued under federal regulations.

Originally, the tax included in the Senate bill was estimated to raise \$149 billion through 2019. Trumka said the revisions would reduce that amount by \$60 billion — money that negotiators would have to find elsewhere or else reduce the coverage in the legislation.

While the tax would be applied to high-cost plans, the Congressional Budget Office has said its principal impact would be to prompt consumers to purchase lower-value coverage. That, in turn, would raise the income tax they pay by reducing the deduction they can take for health care. □

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Ex-UN weapons inspector charged in child-sex sting

MARYCLAIRE DALE,
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) —

A longtime U.N. weapons inspector who blamed a 2001 sex-sting arrest on his criticism of the Iraq war has again been charged in an online child-sex case, and this time he was caught on camera.

Scott Ritter, 48, of Delmar, New York, engaged in a sexually graphic online chat with an undercover police officer posing as a 15-year-old girl nearly a year ago, police in northeastern Pennsylvania said. He then turned on a webcam and masturbated on camera, they charged.

Monroe County authorities traced the exchange to Ritter through a cell phone number he provided, and confirmed the match through photographs, according to a police affidavit. Charges were filed in November and the Pocono Record revealed Ritter's involvement on Thursday.

Ritter, a 230-pound ex-Marine, declined to comment to reporters gathered Thursday at his home near Albany, New York.

"I told you guys I'm not going to say anything, so please just go away," he said after answering the door to the home, adorned with a welcome mat that reads "U.S. Marine Corps, The Ritters."

Ritter, born William Scott Ritter Jr., served as a UN weapons inspector from 1991 to 1998 before resigning. He soon became a harsh critic of the administration of President George H.W. Bush administration's push toward war with Iraq. In 2003, he acknowledged in TV news appearances that he had faced online child-sex charges in 2001 in New York, but said they were designed to silence his war criticism. The charges were dismissed.

Ritter waived a Dec. 17

preliminary hearing and is free on \$25,000 bail. He is due in court Feb. 23 for a status hearing, and would face trial March 9 barring any requests for continuance.

Defense lawyer Todd Henry did not immediately return a phone message from The Associated Press.

According to published interviews, Ritter has twin daughters who are about 16. He met his second wife, Marina, a translator, while assigned as a counterintelligence officer in the former Soviet Union. They moved to upstate New York about 10 years ago. □



Scott Ritter talks to reporters at his home in Delmar, N.Y., on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010. The former U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq is facing child-sex charges in Pennsylvania for unlawful sexual contact with a minor for alleged online exchanges with police posing as a 15-year-old girl.

Associated Press

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In this Oct. 2, 2009 file photo, Guinea's military leader, Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara, left, salutes next to presidential guard chief Abubakar "Toumba" Diakite, right, during independence day celebrations in Conakry, Guinea. Camara, the rogue leader of Guinea turned up at nearly midnight Wednesday Jan. 13, 2010 in Burkina Faso after Moroccan authorities ejected him, putting the injured army captain within driving distance of the nation he terrorized for nearly a year.

By BOUBACAR DIALLO
RUKMINI CALLIMACHI
Associated Press Writers

CONAKRY, Guinea — Guinea's military junta says its wounded leader must be allowed to return home from a nearby country where he is being held under armed guard.

But the statement read on

Associated Press

state-run radio on Thursday about Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara directly contradicted the junta's No. 2 Gen. Sekouba Konate, who has assured the international community that Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara would not be allowed back into the country.

Konate grabbed control of the country last month after

Guinea's military junta says leader must return

an assassination attempt on the 45-year-old Camara, who was evacuated to Morocco for surgery. In Camara's absence, Konate began taking steps to return Guinea to civilian rule and many fear the efforts would be derailed if the military strongman is allowed back in. U.S. and French officials have been in constant contact with Konate. He assured them that he intended to move swiftly toward elections and that he would prohibit Camara from returning to Guinea, according to a copy of a U.S. State Department report dated Jan. 5 which was shown to The Associated Press on Thursday.

Camara is accused of crimes against humanity for his alleged complicity in a massacre of

civilians and may be indicted by the international criminal court, but as of now there is no legal ground for detaining him. In a surprise move, Morocco flew the wounded Camara to Burkina Faso on Tuesday, where Konate flew to meet him.

The two have been meeting behind closed doors in sessions mediated by Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore. Late on Thursday, a nine-member delegation of junta officials arrived in Ouagadougou to demand the return of their president.

"The collective members of (the junta) and the chiefs of staff of the armies of air, sea and land stand in solidarity behind Gen. Sekouba Konate's call for a rapid transition,"

said the statement read on state radio. "But we encourage and ask for the quick return of Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara to Conakry. We are recommending that Gen. Sekouba Konate bring him back (in his plane)," it said.

Upon arriving in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, the permanent secretary of the junta, Col. Moussa Keita, told reporters the delegation would not leave without their leader. "We have been sent by the sovereign and independent people of Guinea," Keita said. "We have come to bring back our president."

Camara came to power a little over a year ago in an army-led coup hours after Dec. 23, 2008 death of former strongman Lansana Conte. □



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PG	OLD DOGS	daily: matinee:	4:15 12:15	6:15 2:15	8:15 late show:
G	THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG	daily: matinee:	5:15 12:45	3:00	late show:
R	NINJA ASSASSIN	daily: matinee:		8:00 late show:	10:15 11:30
PG-13	AVATAR 3D	daily: matinee:	4:30 1:15	7:45 late show:	11:00
PG	FANTASTIC MR. FOX	daily: matinee:	4:15 12:15	2:15	late show:

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PG-13	SHERLOCK HOLMES	daily: matinee:	5:30 2:30	8:30 late show:	11:30	
PG	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS "THE SQUEAKQUEL"	daily: matinee:	4:00 12:00	6:00 2:00	late show:	
G	THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG	daily: matinee:	4:30 12:00	2:15	late show:	
PG-13	IT'S COMPLICATED	daily: matinee:		6:45 late show:	9:15 11:45	
PG-13	THE IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS	daily: matinee:	6:00 12:30	8:45 3:15	late show:	11:30
PG-13	AVATAR 3D	daily: matinee:	4:45 1:30	8:00 late show:	11:15	
R	ARMORED	daily: matinee:		8:00 late show:	10:00 12:00	

Taliban chief believed alive after U.S. missiles hit

CHRIS BRUMMITT

Associated Press Writers

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The leader of the Pakistani Taliban was apparently targeted in a U.S. missile strike on a meeting of militant commanders close to the Afghan border Thursday, but he escaped unhurt, Pakistani officials and militants said. Twelve insurgents were believed killed.

The death of Hakimullah Mehsud would be a major victory for both for Washington and Islamabad in their fight against Islamist militants. Mehsud appeared on a video released last week sitting next to the Jordanian militant who killed seven CIA employees in a suicide attack in December in Afghanistan. Mehsud's Tehrik-e-Taliban movement, which is linked to al-Qaida and the Taliban across the border in Afghanistan, has also claimed responsibility for scores of bloody suicide bombings in Pakistan in recent months against military, civilian and government targets.

The U.S. missile strike was the eighth such attack in two weeks in Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal region, an unprecedented volley of drone attacks since the CIA-led program began in earnest two years ago. The surge signals the Obama administration's reliance on the tactic despite official protest from Islamabad.

One or more unmanned U.S. spy planes fired at least two missiles into a large complex that had been used as a religious school in the past in the Pasalkot area close to the border with South Waziristan soon after dawn broke, Pakistani intelligence officials said.

The dead militants included two foreigners, while at least eight others were wounded, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak to the media on the record.

Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special envoy to Pakistan

and Afghanistan, said that he had no information on the strike but that Mehsud's death would be a good thing. America does not acknowledge to being behind the program and its officials rarely talk about it directly. "He either is, or was, a very bad person," Holbrooke told foreign correspondents in the capital, Islamabad.

Three Pakistani intelligence officials and four militants told the AP that Mehsud was not among the dead.

He had been expected to attend the meeting, but authorities were still trying to determine whether he ever made it to the session, the officials said. They cited wireless communications intercepts tracking Mehsud's movements.

The militants said Mehsud was alive, safe and traveling. They spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject and for personal security reasons.

Confirming the casualties in U.S. missile strikes is very difficult and often takes weeks. Pakistani officials are believed to provide some of the intelligence used in the strikes, but it is unclear whether they have access to the high definition video images captured by the drones.

Mehsud's predecessor, Baitullah Mehsud, was killed in a drone strike last August in neighboring South Waziristan.

For 18 days after that strike, militants denied his death even as U.S. and Pakistani officials said they were increasingly confident he had been killed.

Hakimullah Mehsud, 28, has a reputation as a particularly ruthless militant. He has taken responsibility for brazen strikes on Pakistani civilians, including the bombing of the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar last June and the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore earlier in the year.

His men have also been



In this image taken from undated video made available from Taliban sources on Saturday Jan. 9, 2010, purportedly showing Humam Khalil Abu Mulal al-Balawi, right, reading a statement to camera vowing revenge for the death of Pakistani Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud, while sitting next to the new leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Hakimullah Mehsud. Jordanian doctor Humam Khalil Abu Mulal al-Balawi, is identified by news organizations to be the man who killed seven CIA employees in a suicide attack in Afghanistan on Dec. 30. The authenticity of this video is unconfirmed.

Associated Press

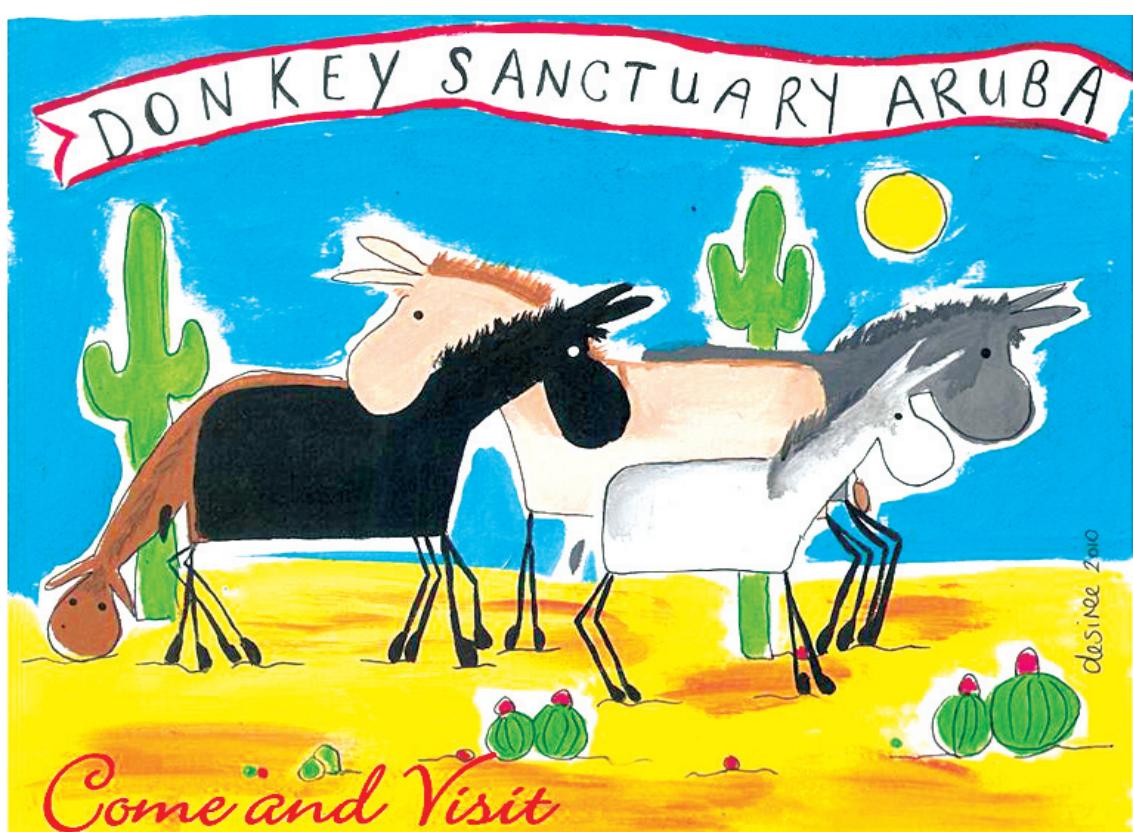
blamed for attacking U.S. and NATO supply convoys traveling through northwestern Pakistan en route to Afghanistan. He first appeared in public to journalists in November 2008, when he offered to take reporters on a ride in a U.S. Humvee taken from a supply truck heading to Afghanistan.

There is a 10 million rupee (\$120,000) bounty on his head.

There have been more than 70 U.S. missile strikes in Pakistan over the last two years, according to a tally by The Associated Press. At least 700 people are reported to have been killed, many of them militants, including several foreign al-Qaida

leaders, according to U.S. and Pakistani officials.

In public, Pakistani government officials criticize the strikes and say the United States, which is deeply unpopular in Pakistan, is acting unilaterally. But there is little doubt Islamabad agrees to at least some of the attacks and provides targeting information for them. □



AID SNARLED**Continued from Front Page**

Patience already was wearing thin among the poorest who were waiting for aid, said David Wimhurst, spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping mission.

"Unfortunately, they're slowly getting more angry and impatient, because when they see us moving — and we're patrolling the streets, the military and the police are out patrolling the streets in order to maintain a calm situation, so that humanitarian aid can be delivered," he said.

In Washington, President Barack Obama announced "one of the largest relief efforts in our recent history," starting with \$100 million in aid. The first of 800 paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division were to deploy to Haiti from North Carolina, to be followed by more than 2,000 Marines.

From Europe, Asia and the Americas, other governments, the U.N. and private aid groups were sending planeloads of high-energy biscuits and other food, tents, blankets, water-purification gear, heavy equipment for removing debris, helicopters and other transport, and teams of hundreds of search-and-rescue, medical and other specialists.

But two days after much of this ramshackle city was shattered, the global helping hand was slowed by the poor roads, airport and seaport of a wretchedly poor nation.

Some 60 aid flights had arrived by midday Thursday, but they then had to contend with the chokepoint of an overloaded Toussaint L'Overture International Airport. At midday, the Federal Aviation Administration said it was temporarily halting all civilian flights from the U.S. at Haiti's request, because the airport was jammed and jet fuel was limited for return flights. The control tower had been destroyed in Tuesday's tremor, complicating air traffic.

Civilian relief flights were later allowed to resume.

Those which did land then had to navigate Haiti's inadequate roads, sometimes blocked by debris or by quake survivors looking for safe open areas as aftershocks still rumbled through the city. The U.N. World Food Program said the quake-damaged seaport made ship deliveries of aid impossible.

The looting of shops that broke out after the 7.0-magnitude quake struck late Tuesday afternoon added to concerns. The Brazilian military warned aid convoys to add security to guard against looting by the desperate population.

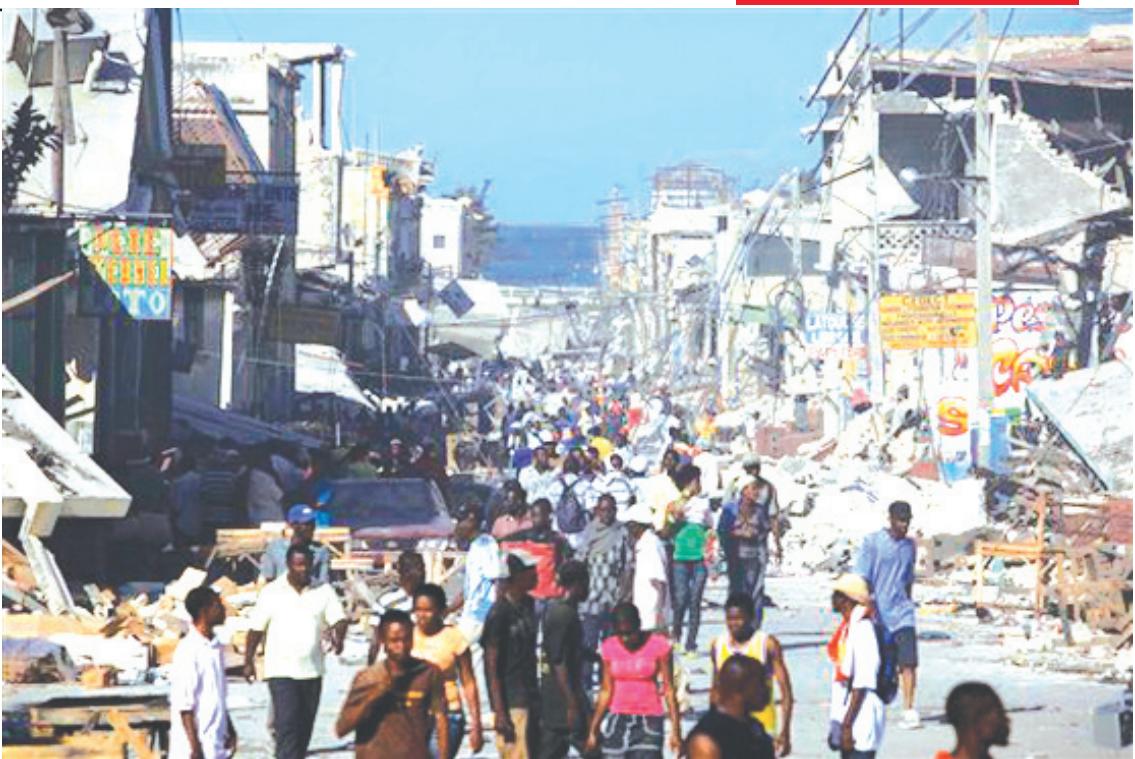
"There is no other way to get provisions," American Red Cross representative Matt Marek said of the store looting. "Even if you have money, those resources are going to be exhausted in a few days." The city's "ti-merchant," mostly women who sell food on the streets, were expected to run out soon.

The quake brought down Port-au-Prince's gleaming white National Palace and other government buildings, disabling much of the national leadership. That vacuum was evident Thursday.

"Donations are coming in to the airport here, but there is not yet a system to get it in," said Kate Conradt, a spokeswoman for the Save the Children aid group. "It's necessary to create a structure to stock and distribute supplies," the Brazilian military said.

Edmond Mulet, a former U.N. peacekeeping chief in Haiti, was expected to arrive later Thursday from U.N. headquarters in New York to coordinate the relief effort. The first U.S. military units to arrive took on a coordinating role at the airport, but State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley underlined, "We're not taking over Haiti."

Across the sprawling, hilly city, people milled about in open areas, hopeful for help,



Haiti's National Palace is seen damaged in Port-au-Prince, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010. A powerful earthquake struck the country on Tuesday. BELOW: A damaged building is seen after an earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010. The largest earthquake ever recorded in the area rocked Haiti on Tuesday. The earthquake had a preliminary magnitude of 7.0 and was centered about 10 miles (15 kilometers) west of Port-au-Prince.

Associated Press

sometimes setting up camps amid piles of salvaged goods, including food scavenged from the rubble. Police and

U.N. peacekeeper trucks pushed down crowded streets, showing little sign of coordinated action.

Small groups by roadsides could be seen burying dead. Other dust-covered bodies were being dragged down streets, toward hospitals where relatives hoped to leave them. Countless remained unburied, stacked up, children's bodies lying atop mothers, tiny feet poking from blankets.

The injured, meanwhile, waited for treatment in makeshift holding areas — outside the General Hospital, for example, where the stench from piles of dead, just a few yards (meters) away, wafted over the assembled living.

Here and there, small tragedies unfolded. In the Petionville suburb, friends held back Kettely Clerge — "I want to see her," she sobbed — as neighbors with bare hands tried to dig out her 9-year-old daughter, Harryssa Keem Clerge, pleading for rescue, from beneath their home's

rubble. "There's no police, there's nobody," the hopeless mother cried. By day's end, the girl was dead.

At the collapsed U.N. peacekeeping headquarters, an Estonian guard, Tarmo Joveer, was pulled alive and unhurt from the ruins at 8 a.m. Thursday, 39 hours after the quake — a "small miracle," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in New York. But U.N. officials reported that 36 other U.N. personnel, mostly peacekeepers and international police, were confirmed dead and almost 200 remained missing, including top staff.

Nearby, firefighters from Fairfax County, Va., and a rescue team from China, with snifferdogs, clambered through rubble and searched for signs of life. Two excavators stood by, ready to dig for survivors — or dead.

For the long-suffering people of Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation, shock and disbelief were giving way to despair.

"We need food. The people are suffering. My neighbors and friends are suffering," said Sylvain Angerlotte, 22.

"We don't have money. We don't have nothing to eat. We need pure water."

But life also went on. Brazilian soldiers helped deliver a baby girl in an improvised garage-hospital at their base, just hours after the quake hit. Capt. Fabricio Almeida de Moura said the child was doing well, but the life of the mother, who apparently went into labor from the shock of the tremor, was in danger from bleeding, the Agencia Brasil news service reported.

The unimaginable scope of the catastrophe left many Haitians, a fervently religious people, in helpless tears and prayer.

Reached by The Associated Press from New York, Yael Talleyrand, a 16-year-old student in Jacmel, on Haiti's south coast, told of thousands of people made homeless by the quake and sleeping on an airfield runway, "crying, praying and I had never seen this in my entire life."

Earlier, she said, one woman had run through Jacmel's streets screaming, "God, we know you can kill us! We know you're strongest! You don't need to show us!" □

Italy recovers \$240 million in stolen art, relics

ROME (AP) — Ancient frescoes, statues and decorated vases that graced tables more than 2,000 years ago were among tens of thousands of artifacts recovered last year by Italy's art police, officials said Thursday.

Authorities said they recovered or seized nearly 60,000 pieces of looted or stolen artwork and archaeological artifacts worth €165 million (\$239 million) in 2009.

That compares with the €183 million in art and artifacts recovered in 2008, the Carabinieri art squad said in its annual accounting of the government's efforts to recover looted antiquities and stolen artwork.

Police figures show the number of illegal archaeological excavations discovered in 2009 decreased dramatically, from 238 in 2008 to just 58 in 2009. But at the same time, the number of people charged with falsifying artwork rose more than 400 percent.

Giovanni Nistri, the commander of the Carabinieri's art squad, said most of the falsifications were of modern art "probably because the art of today is easier to falsify with fewer technicalities."

In all, Italy recovered 39,584 looted archaeological artifacts and 19,043 other culturally important works, including entire libraries, in 2009, officials said.

Among them were 137 artifacts returned to Italy from Switzerland which had been in the possession of Zurich-based restorers Fritz Burki & Son.

Burki is known for having restored the Euphronios krater, one of the finest ancient Greek vases in existence. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York purchased it for \$1 million in 1972 from an art dealer later accused of acquiring looted artifacts. The vase was returned to Italy last year.

The Italians are working with Swiss authorities to locate another 300 missing pieces believed to have been in the Burki's possession, a Carabinieri press release said.

Some of the 137 recovered pottery pieces, statues and other artifacts were on display at a press conference Thursday, along with a 1st century A.D. fresco and a banquet vase dating from 580 B.C. to 570 B.C., which were stolen from Italy and recently turned



Italian Carabinieri paramilitary police general Giovanni Nistri talks, next to a plaster wall painting dating back to the first century A.C. during a press conference in Rome on occasion of its return to Italy, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010

Associated Press

up at Christie's auction house in New York.

Overall, theft of Italian artworks decreased 14.5 percent in 2009 compared to 2008, thanks in part to

better international collaboration, better security monitoring at museums and archaeological sites and beefed up cultural heritage data banks, officials said. □

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R&B singer Teddy Pendergrass dies at 59



In an Aug. 1, 2000, file photo Teddy Pendergrass, right, performs at the Good Neighbor Community Outreach Celebration Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2000 in Philadelphia. Pendergrass, who became R&B's reigning sex symbol in the 1970s and '80s with his forceful, masculine voice and passionate love ballads died Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010 at age 59.

(AP Photo/Suzanne Plunkett/file)

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY,
AP Music Writer

NEW YORK — R&B singer Teddy Pendergrass, who was one of the most electric and successful figures in music until a car crash 28 years ago left him in a wheelchair, has died of colon cancer. He was 59.

Pendergrass died Wednesday in suburban Philadelphia, where he had been hospitalized for months.

The singer's son, Teddy Pendergrass II, said his father underwent colon cancer surgery eight months ago and had "a difficult recovery."

Before the crash, Pendergrass established a new era of R&B with an explosive, raw voice that symbolized masculinity, passion and the joys and sorrow of romance in songs such as "Close the Door," "It Don't Hurt Now," "Love T.K.O." and other hits that have since become classics.

He was an international superstar and sex symbol. His career was at its apex — and still climbing.

Friend and longtime collaborator Kenny Gamble, of the renowned production duo Gamble & Huff, teamed with Pendergrass on his biggest hits and recalled how the singer was even working on a movie.

"He had about 10 platinum albums in a row, so he was a very, very successful recording artist and as a performing artist," Gamble said Thursday. "He had a tremendous career

ahead of him, and the accident sort of got in the way of many of those plans."

Pendergrass, who was born in Philadelphia in 1950, suffered a spinal cord injury in a 1982 car accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down — still able to sing but without his signature power. The image of the strong, virile lover was replaced with one that drew sympathy.

But instead of becoming bitter or depressed, Pendergrass created a new identity — that as a role model, Gamble said. "He never showed me that he was angry at all about his accident," Gamble said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "In fact, he was very courageous."

Pendergrass left a remarkable imprint on the music world as he ushered in a new era in R&B with his fiery, sensual and forceful brand of soul and his ladies' man image, burnished by his strikingly handsome looks.

Gamble said Pendergrass was one of a kind as an artist and boasted a powerful voice and "a great magnetism."

"He was a great baritone singer, and he had a real smooth sound, but he had a real rough sound, too, when he wanted to exert power in his voice," Gamble said.

But it wasn't Pendergrass' voice that got him his break in the music business — it was his drum playing abilities. He met Harold Melvin, who was looking for replacement members for his group, the

Blue Notes, and signed on to be the drummer. Later, he became the lead singer of the group, which became known as Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes.

The band started working with Gamble and Leon Huff and had signature hits in the early 1970s with "Wake Up Everybody" and "If You Don't Know Me by Now."

But Pendergrass had creative differences with Melvin and soon left for a solo career, according to his Web site. It was then he would become a sex symbol for the R&B genre, working women into a

frenzy with hits such as "Only You" and concerts dedicated for ladies only.

"The females," Gamble said, "loved Teddy Pendergrass. The females were very attracted to him and his music."

Unlike the songs of many of today's male R&B crooners, Pendergrass' music bordered on eroticism without explicit lyrics or coarse language — just through the raw emotion in his voice. "Turn Off the Lights" was a tune that perhaps best represented the many moods of Pendergrass — tender and coaxing yet strong as the song reaches its

climax. Fans were devastated when, at age 31, Pendergrass was critically injured after his Rolls-Royce hit a tree. He spent six months in a hospital and returned to recording the next year with the album "Love Language."

He continued to sing and recorded several albums, receiving Grammy nominations.

"To all his fans who loved his music, thank you," his son said. "He will live on through his music."

It was 19 years before Pendergrass resumed performing at his own concerts. He made his return on Memorial Day weekend in 2001, with two sold-out shows in Atlantic City, N.J.

Gamble noted Pendergrass' charitable work for people with spinal cord injuries, his performances despite pain and his focus on the positive in the face of great challenges.

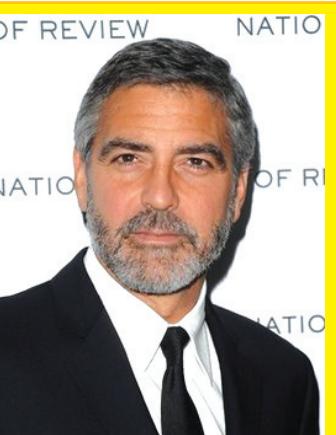
"He used to say something in his act in the wheelchair, 'Don't let the wheelchair fool you,' because he still proclaimed he was a lover," Gamble said.

But his career was never the same. Gamble said it was difficult for Pendergrass to project vocally like he once did: "The breathing aspect of it, he wasn't really able to deal with it."

And while he had albums, he was no longer seen as the sex symbol but more of a sympathetic, tragic figure, even though he still had a strong following among his core female fans.

After the accident, he dedicated much of his life to helping others with spinal cord injuries and founded the Teddy Pendergrass Alliance to do just that. Gamble said he wanted to help others.

"In his quiet moments, he probably did a lot of reflection. But I never saw him pity himself. He stayed busy," Gamble said. "(But) I feel that he's in a better place now. ... He doesn't have to go through that pain or whatever he was going through anymore." □



Actor George Clooney attends the National Board of Review of motion pictures awards gala in New York, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010.

(AP Photo/Peter Kramer)

George Clooney, MTV working on Haiti telethon

NEW YORK — MTV Networks says it is working with George Clooney to stage a telethon for Haitian earthquake relief on Jan. 22.

A representative for MTV said Thursday that details are still being worked out. But Mark Jafar said they are planning one.

There's no word yet about other stars getting involved. A representative for Clooney did not immediately respond to a message seeking details. Thousands are feared dead after the massive earthquake, and the Caribbean island nation desperately needs aid. □

By JILL LAWLESS,
Associated Press Writer

LONDON — OMG: "Legally Blonde: The Musical" has warmed the hearts of London's crusty theater critics.

The stage show, based on the 2001 film starring Reese Witherspoon, tells the story of Elle Woods, a bubbly blonde from Los Angeles who discovers her inner strength at Harvard Law School. The show earned a lukewarm reception on Broadway, where it ran for a year and a half before closing in October 2008.

"Blonde" opened Wednesday at London's Savoy Theatre after a month of previews that saw large, enthusiastic and female-dominated audiences embracing its brand of frivolous fun. Despite themselves, British critics were largely won over, too. "I tried, I really tried to hate this show, but resistance is futile," wrote Charles Spencer in Thursday's Daily Telegraph, praising the show as "light, fast, fun and frothy."

"The stage show has its tongue in its cheek throughout, it knows it is ridiculous and infantile, and celebrates the fact with knowing wit," he said. The Independent's Paul Taylor declared the musical "ridiculously enjoyable from start to finish," and a big improvement on the movie. □

'Blonde' bombshell: London critics praise musical

BUSINESS**Aruba TODAY****Obama tells banks: 'We want our money back'**

By JIM KUHNHENN,
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama told banks Thursday they should pay a new tax to recoup the cost of bailing out foundering firms at the height of the financial crisis. "We want our money back," he said.

In a brief appearance with advisers at the White House, Obama branded the latest round of bank bonuses as "obscene." But he said his goal was to prevent such excesses in the future, not to punish banks for past behavior.

The tax, which would require congressional approval, would last at least 10 years and generate about \$90 billion over the decade, according to administration estimates. "If these companies are in good enough shape to afford massive bonuses, they are surely in good enough shape to afford paying back every penny to taxpayers," Obama said.

Advisers believe the administration can make an argument that banks should tap their bonus pools for the fee instead of passing the cost on to consumers.

The president's tone was emphatic and populist, capitalizing on public antipathy toward Wall Street. With the sharp words, he also tried to deflect some of the growing skepticism aimed at his own economic policies as unemployment stubbornly hovers around 10 percent.

The proposed 0.15 percent tax on the liabilities of large financial institutions would apply only to those companies with assets of more than \$50 billion — a group estimated at about 50. Administration officials estimate that 60 percent of the revenue would come from the 10 biggest ones.

They would have to pay up

even though many did not accept any taxpayer assistance and most that did have repaid the infusions.

Obama said big banks had acted irresponsibly, taken reckless risk for short-term profits and plunged into a crisis of their own making. He cast the struggle ahead as one between the finance industry and average people.

"We are already hearing a hue and cry from Wall Street, suggesting that this proposed fee is not only unwelcome but unfair, that by some twisted logic, it is more appropriate for the American people to bear the cost of the bailout rather than the industry that benefited from it, even though these executives are out there giving themselves huge bonuses," Obama said.

He renewed his call for a regulatory overhaul of the industry and scolded bankers for opposing the tighter oversight in legislation moving through Congress.

"What I'd say to these executives is this: Instead of setting a phalanx of lobbyists to fight this proposal or employing an army of lawyers and accountants to help evade the fee, I'd suggest you might want to consider simply meeting your responsibility," Obama said.

At issue is the net cost of the fund initiated by the Bush administration to help financial institutions get rid of soured assets. The \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) has expanded to help auto companies and homeowners.

Insurer American International Group, the largest beneficiary at nearly \$70 billion, would have to pay the tax. But General Motors Co. and Chrysler Group LLC, whose \$66 billion in government loans are not expected to be repaid fully, would not. □

Budget director Peter Orszag, right, looks on as President Barack Obama announces a new fee on big banks to recover up to \$120 billion in taxpayers' money used to prop up corporations during the economic crisis, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010, at the White House in Washington. From left are: Council of Economic Advisers Chair Christina Romer, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, National Economic Council Director Larry Summers.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)



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Four-way tie for early lead at Sony Open



Davis Love III follows his drive off the first tee during the first round of the Sony Open golf tournament, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010, in Honolulu.

Associated Press

NBA's Arenas charged with felony gun possession

By SARAH KARUSH

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON—Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas was charged Thursday with felony gun possession in connection with a Dec. 21 locker room confrontation with a teammate.

Prosecutors charged Arenas with one count of carrying a pistol without a license, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. The charges were filed in D.C. Superior Court in an “information,” a document that generally signals a plea deal.

Arenas is scheduled to appear Friday afternoon before a judge. Arenas’ lawyer had no immediate comment. The NBA declined to comment.

The Wizards said in a statement that they were aware of the charge and were carefully following the legal process.

“We will also continue to cooperate fully with the proper authorities and the NBA,” the team said.

Arenas, who has been suspended indefinitely by the NBA pending the investigation, has said he kept multiple guns in his locker at the Verizon Center. The 28-year-old three-time All-Star said he wanted to keep them away from his children and didn’t know it was illegal.

He says he took them out of the locker Dec. 21 in a “misguided effort to play a joke” on a teammate.

League officials have said the locker-room incident stemmed from a card-game dispute between Arenas and teammate Javaris Crittenton on a plane trip back from the West Coast two days earlier.

At least seven Wizards players and coach Flip Saunders have appeared before a grand

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

HONOLULU (AP)—Davis Love III birdied his last hole for a bogey-free 5-under 65 that put him in an early four-way tie for the lead with defending champion Zach Johnson, Ryan Palmer and U.S. PGA Tour rookie Troy Merritt at the Sony Open on Thursday.

“It’s a nice way to start the year,” Love said.

The relative calm on Oahu during practice rounds gave way to swaying of palm trees at sunrise along the shores of Waikiki, providing tough conditions for the morning.

Johnson, playing in the same group with Love, made seven birdies over his



In this Oct. 13, 2009, photo, Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas shoots a free throw in a preseason NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons in Grand Rapids, Mich. Arenas has been charged with a felony in connection with last month’s locker room confrontation with a teammate. Arenas was charged Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010, with one count of carrying a pistol without a license.

Associated Press

jury or been questioned by authorities. □

final 11 holes to join him atop the leaderboard.

The biggest surprise was Merritt, the winner of Q-school last month who had never played in a U.S. PGA Tour event. Merritt felt the butterflies on the first tee, then played like a veteran. “Things went way better than I thought,” Merritt said.

Johnson had no idea that he inspired another player to get off to a calm start. Palmer was looking for something to read earlier in the week when he came across an article about Johnson that dealt with taking golf one day at a time. He didn’t look at leaderboards or worry about the weekend until he signed for his 65.

“Best start in my seven-year career,” Palmer said.

the par-5 18th to join the leaders.

Fowler opened with a three-putt double bogey from 8 feet and wound up with a 75.

Masters champion Angel Cabrera hit wedge into the par-5 ninth, with a strong breeze at his back, and finished with a birdie to join the group at 68 that included Pat Perez.

John Daly, competing on a sponsor’s exemption, struggled with his putter and a birdie on the par-5 18th gave him a 73.

Love again needs another big start to the year to get into the Masters. He played so much last year that he felt like he was spinning his wheels, and the end came after he withdrew at Disney World after one round.

Johnson followed his own advice. Asked if this was the start of an encore from a year ago, he quickly replied, “No.”

“I’m trying to forget about those results from last year, but I’m trying to remember the positive vibes ... some of the feelings that I had with my shots,” Johnson said. “But if I dwell in the past too much, I usually start backing up in the wrong direction.”

Merritt was one of four players at the Sony Open who had never teed it up on the tour. He played alongside 21-year-old Rickie Fowler, who brought loads of expectations into his rookie season. But it was Merritt who shined, plodding his way along and finishing with a birdie on

Then he went two months without competing, the last month without even feeling grass under his feet. He couldn’t wait to play, so after checking into the hotel at Waialae on Saturday, he rushed out to the 11th green in twilight and began putting. Of all the practicing he did in his garage, it was his putting that left him curious. Love, however, decided to give each putt one read and hit it like it was a pro-am round, and he was pleasantly surprised to see so many of them go in. “I was optimistic,” Love said. “But I was anxious about competing. Once I got it going, once I got under par ... I’ve been out here a long time. You don’t forget.” □

NHL Roundup

Crosby helps douse Flames, Pens win 3-1

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — Sidney Crosby scored his 30th goal of the season as the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Calgary Flames 3-1 on Wednesday, closing the gap atop the NHL's Atlantic Division.

Crosby scored early in the first period, and Marc-Andre Fleury made 37 saves for Pittsburgh, which drew within six points of Atlantic leader New Jersey.

Bill Guerin scored the deciding goal on a power play midway through the second period — soon after Mark Giordano had equalized for the Flames, who missed a chance to go clear top of the Northwest Division.

Pittsburgh's Tyler Kennedy completed the scoring late in the third.

Wild 5, Canucks 2

In St. Paul, Minnesota, Nicklas Backstrom set a franchise record for wins by a goaltender as Minnesota overcame Vancouver.

Antti Miettinen scored two of Minnesota's three third-period goals, while Kyle Brodziak, Mikko Koivu and Owen Nolan also scored to help the Wild win its fourth

straight game.

Backstrom stopped 29 shots for his 114th victory with Minnesota. Manny Fernandez held the previous franchise record, winning 113 times from 2000-07.

Ryan Kesler and Alex Burrows scored for Vancouver, which has lost three straight for the first time in over two months.

Capitals 5, Panthers 4, SO

In Sunrise, Florida, Tomas Fleischmann scored in the sixth round of a shootout to complete Washington's comeback victory over Florida.

Jason Chimera, Brian Pothier, Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom scored in regulation for the Capitals, while Michael Frolik, Dominic Moore, Stephen Weiss and Gregory Campbell countered for Florida.

Brendan Morrison and Brooks Laich also had shootout goals for Washington, while Frolik and Weiss scored for the Panthers in the tiebreaker.

Ducks 4, Bruins 3

In Anaheim, California, defenseman Steve Eminger gave Anaheim the third period lead with his first goal

of the season as the Ducks extended their winning streak to a season-best five games.

Todd Marchant set up Ryan Getzlaf's 100th NHL goal with his 300th career assist, Dan Sexton had a power-play goal, and fellow rookie Matt Beleskey also scored for the Ducks.

Zdeno Chara, Marco Sturm and defenseman Matt Hunwick scored for the undermanned Bruins.

In other games it was, Washington 5, Florida 4, SO; Minnesota 5, Vancouver 2; Pittsburgh 3, Calgary 1; and Anaheim 4, Boston 3.

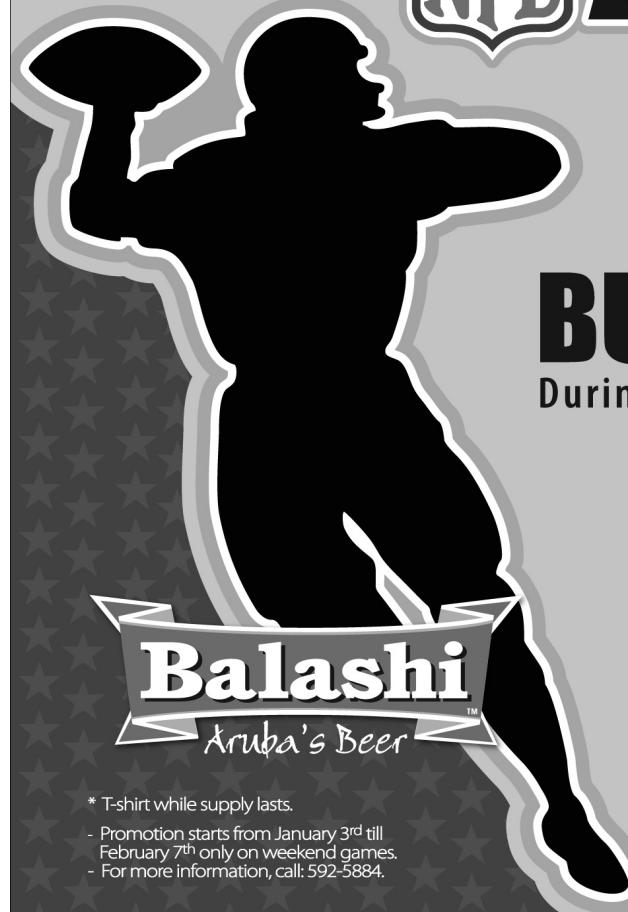


Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby, left, scores on Calgary Flames goalie Miikka Kiprusoff, from Finland, during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010.

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Dallas Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki, center, of Germany, attempts a shot as Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant, left rear, looks on in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010, in Dallas. The Lakers won 100-95.

Associated Press

*NBA Roundup***Kobe winner lifts L.A. over Mavs**

DALLAS (AP) — Kobe Bryant nailed the game-winning shot with 28 seconds left, lifting the Los Angeles Lakers to a 100-95 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday in a clash of the top two teams in the NBA's Western Conference.

Bryant, suffering from a sore back, had only 10 points on 5-of-11 shooting, but Andrew Bynum had 22 points and 11 rebounds to help the Lakers end a three-game road losing streak.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 30

points for the Mavericks to become the 34th player in NBA history with 20,000.

Nuggets 115, Magic 97

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 27 points to lead Denver over Orlando in a meeting of two divisional leaders.

Chauncey Billups added 24 to help the Nuggets open a 1-1/2 game lead atop the Northwest Division.

Matt Barnes scored a season-high 28 points for Orlando, which played its third straight without leading scorer Vince Carter and saw its Southeast Division lead sliced to half a game.

Spurs 109, Thunder 108, OT In Oklahoma City, rookie DeJuan Blair set new career highs with 28 points and 21 rebounds as San Antonio edged Oklahoma City in overtime.

Richard Jefferson hit the winner. He ended up with the ball after a Spurs' play went awry, with Manu Ginobili diving out of bounds to save a pass that bounced off of Antonio McDyess. George Hill passed to Jefferson, who beat the shot clock with a 13-foot jumper in the lane with 9 seconds left.

Kevin Durant scored 35 points for the Thunder.

Trail Blazers 120, Bucks 108

In Portland, Oregon, Portland led by as many as 33 points in the second half and shot over 60 percent from the field in defeating Milwaukee.

Brandon Roy, who scored 22 points, went to the locker room with a little more than six minutes left for treatment on a tight hamstring and did not return.

Ersan Ilyasova scored 24 points for Milwaukee, which has lost three straight.

Hawks 94, Wizards 82

In Atlanta, the hosts responded to a Washington challenge to notch a third straight win.

Joe Johnson scored 24 points and Jamal Crawford added 22 for Atlanta, which led by 22 points late in the first half, but saw Washington draw within two points in the fourth quarter.

Despite 25 points from Antawn Jamison, the Wizards lost their third straight as the team tries to play through problems related to Gilbert Arenas' suspension.

In Indianapolis, the hosts came from 24 points down in the first half to beat Phoenix.

Danny Granger scored 33 points and Mike Dunleavy added a season-high 30 for the Pacers, who were down by 23 points against Toronto on Monday before rallying for a victory.

Amare Stoudemire scored 21 points for the Suns.

Hornets 108, Clippers 94

In New Orleans, Chris Paul had 15 points and 15 assists to lead New Orleans to its seventh win in eight games, downing Los Angeles.

Peja Stojakovic, hitting at least four 3-pointers in a game for the ninth time this season, scored 20 points to help New Orleans beat the Clippers a 12th consecutive time.

Baron Davis scored 19 points for Los Angeles.

In other NBA action:
Atlanta 94, Washington 82;
Indiana 122, Phoenix 114;
New York 93, Philadelphia 92;
Boston 111, New Jersey 87;
New Orleans 108, L.A. Clippers 94;
San Antonio 109, Oklahoma City 108, OT;
L.A. Lakers 100, Dallas 95;
Houston 120, Minnesota 114,3OT;
Denver 115, Orlando 97;
Portland 120, Milwaukee 108; and **Miami 115, Golden State 102.□**

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Federer, Serena Williams top lists of Australian Open seeds

JOHN PYE
AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — No. 1-ranked Roger Federer and Serena Williams top the lists of seeded players for the Australian Open, with Belgium's Yanina Wickmayer the only highly-ranked player missing out.

The men's seeds follow the ATP rankings exactly from Nos. 1-32; the women's list follows the WTA rankings from Nos. 1-15, skips Wickmayer, then moves every player from Nos. 17-33 up a spot.

Wickmayer, who won the Auckland WTA tournament last week — her first event since her one-year ban for doping violations was overturned — is ranked 16th but is playing in the qualifying tournament.

An International Tennis Federation spokesman said Thursday that because Wickmayer was ineligible to play the Australian Open when entries closed — a Belgian court had since overturned the ban — she had to enter the qualifying tournament.

And since the qualifying

tournament will not finish until the weekend — after Friday's draw — tournament officials could not be sure that Wickmayer would qualify for the 128-player main draw. Serena Williams has won the Australian title each odd-numbered year since 2003, beating No. 2 Dinara Safina in straight sets in last year's final.

Safina is seeded second this year, followed by French Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova, U.S. Open finalist Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark, Olympic champion Elena Dementieva and Venus Williams.

Organizers resisted giving former No. 1-ranked Justine Henin a seeding for her first Grand Slam event back from retirement.

The 27-year-old Henin, who won seven singles majors before quitting in May 2008 while holding the No. 1 ranking, made her tour comeback last week at the Brisbane International, where she lost in the final to fellow Belgian Kim Clijsters.

Clijsters, who won the U.S.

Open in September in only her third tournament back from more than two years in retirement, was seeded 15th for the Australian Open.

No. 2 Rafael Nadal, who beat Federer in the final here last year, is seeded second, followed by 2008 Australian champion Novak Djokovic, U.S. Open champion Juan Martin del Potro and No. 5 Andy Murray.

Federer won the Australian Open in 2004, 2006 and 2007, losing to the eventual champion in '05, '08 and last year.

After losing to Nadal last year, Federer recovered to win the French Open and Wimbledon, increasing his career tally to



Serena Williams of the United States prepares to smash the ball to Aravane Rezai of France in their women's singles semifinal match at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010. Williams won the match 3-6, 7-5, 6-4; and Roger Federer from Switzerland practices for the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010. The Australian Open runs Jan. 19-31, 2010.

Associated Press

15 Grand Slam singles titles, beating Pete Sampras' record of 14.

He completed a career Grand Slam of winning all four

majors by winning the French for the first time. He lost the U.S. Open final to del Potro, ending a streak of five straight titles at New York. □

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Russia's Elena Dementieva waves to the crowd after her 6-3, 6-1 win over Victoria Azarenka of Belarus in their women's singles semifinal match at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010.

Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Top-ranked Serena Williams rallied from a set 5-2 down to beat

"Was I down that far? I didn't even realize," Williams said. "I felt like I literally lifted my game at that point, because I knew I was going to be headed to Melbourne if I didn't."

"I kept thinking, 'I want to get a little more practice, and I'd hate for it to end now.'" □

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY



Chris Johnson unanimous choice for AP All-Pro team

By BARRY WILNER

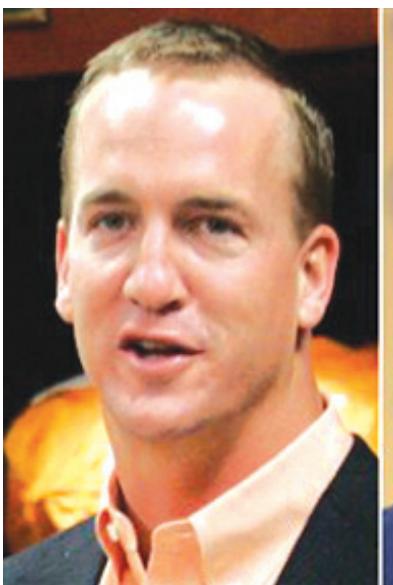
AP Football Writer

NEW YORK — Chris Johnson didn't get any votes for MVP. He didn't miss any for The Associated Press 2009 NFL All-Pro team.

The 2,000-yard rusher from the Tennessee Titans was the only unanimous choice for the squad, announced Thursday. He's joined in the backfield by Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, who won an unprecedented fourth Most Valuable Player Award last week, when only quarterbacks received votes.

"That'd be a good thing," said Johnson, who won the Offensive Player of the Year award Wednesday. "Because I feel like if you put a season out there, out of those dudes who got votes or the dudes who won, I wouldn't feel they had a better season than I had, and broke as many records in one season that I had."

For setting the league mark for yards from scrimmage and becoming the sixth 2,000-yard rusher in NFL history, Johnson got all 50 votes from a nationwide panel of sports writers. One other player, San Francisco inside linebacker Patrick Willis, came close with, appropriately, 49.



MANNING



WOODSON



JOHNSON

From left are Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, in a 2009 file photo, Green Bay Packers cornerback Charles Woodson, in a 2010 file photo, and Tennessee Titans running back Chris Johnson, in a 2009 file photo. Johnson, the 2,000-yard rusher, was the only unanimous choice for The Associated Press 2009 NFL All-Pro team, announced Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010.

Associated Press

Cornerbacks Charles Woodson of Green Bay, the Defensive Player of the Year, and Darrelle Revis of the New York Jets each got 48, as did Oakland punter Shane Lechler.

"I just think Patrick is a very unique guy," 49ers coach Mike Singletary said. "He's a guy who's always going to be around the ball. He has the instincts. He has the speed. He can be where he wants to be." He's on the All-Pro team for the second time in his three pro seasons. The other inside

linebacker, Baltimore's Ray Lewis, made it for the seventh time.

Other veteran All-Pros include Manning, chosen for the fifth time, as were Minnesota guard Steve Hutchinson and Vikings defensive tackle Kevin Williams, and Lechler.

The Vikings had the most players on the team with four — running back Adrian Peterson and defensive end Jared Allen also made it. Next was Indianapolis with three: Manning, tight end

Dallas Clark, and DE Dwight Freeney.

New Orleans (guard Jahri Evans and safety Darren Sharper), Dallas (outside linebacker DeMarcus Ware and defensive tackle Jay Ratliff), the Jets (Revis and center Nick Mangold), Denver (tackle Ryan Clady and defensive end Elvis Dumervil) and Cleveland (tackle Joe Thomas and kick returner Joshua Cribbs) had two players.

"To be selected for the All-Pro team is really overwhelming

to me," Clady said. "There are so many great tackles playing right now. To be recognized among them is truly a blessing. I would like to thank my teammates and coaches for this honor."

In all, there were 15 AFC players and 12 from the NFC selected.

Fifteen players made All-Pro for the first time: Johnson, Revis, Sharper, Dumervil, Ratliff, Cribbs, Mangold, Evans, Thomas, Clady, Clark, New England receiver Wes Welker, Philadelphia fullback Leonard Weaver, San Diego placekicker Nick Kaeding and Arizona safety Adrian Wilson. Woodson made it for the first time with Green Bay, second time overall; he was an All-Pro in 1999 with Oakland.

Also selected to the team was Houston receiver Andre Johnson for the second time. Repeaters from last year were Manning, Peterson, Andre Johnson, Hutchinson, Allen, Williams, Ware, Lewis and Lechler. The New York Giants, Washington, Atlanta, Carolina, Tampa Bay, Chicago, Detroit, Seattle, St. Louis, Miami, Buffalo, Jacksonville, Cincinnati, Kansas City and Pittsburgh had no All-Pros this season. □



Baseball commissioner Bud Selig answers reporters' questions following meetings with baseball owners and general managers on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010, in Paradise Valley, Ariz.

Associated Press

MLB donates \$1 million for Haiti relief

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball donated \$1 million on Thursday to help victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

MLB commissioner Bud Selig said in a news release that the contribution was being made on behalf of the league and its 30 teams.

The league also was encouraging fans to help in the relief efforts as part of its "Going Beyond" campaign to help those in need worldwide.

MLB.com also will support the relief efforts by prominently displaying links to UNICEF where fans can make contributions online.

Meanwhile, Indianapolis Colts receiver

Pierre Garcon said he finally made contact with family members in Haiti two days after the earthquake.

Garcon said his mother heard from a family member late Wednesday, and he received calls early Thursday, letting him know some of his relatives were safe.

Garcon's parents emigrated from Haiti to the U.S., where he was born, and most of his relatives still live on the island.

A visibly drained Garcon said many of his family still are unaccounted for. He appreciated the outpouring of support for the nation, but said more help was needed.

The second-year Colts player said it was difficult to focus on Saturday's NFL

playoff game against Baltimore, but it's "something you've got to do." □

Aruba TODAY

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LOCAL

Aruba



On Top Of The News

Email: news@arubatoday.com

Friday, January 15, 2010

Haitian help desk at Red Cross Headquarters

ORANJESTAD - The Aruba Chapter of the International Red Cross is reaching out to Aruba's Haitian community at this moment of crisis. Gabriel and Jean Louis Daquin, who travel between Aruba and Haiti on business regularly, are leading this effort to help the more than 5,000 expatriate Haitian who may not be able to contact family members back on their homeland to locate loved ones.

"News services are reporting almost 120,000 dead on Haiti," commented Gabriel, "but the number is closer to 26,000 casualties at this time. These large numbers are principally due to communications on Haiti being in a complete state of ruin, and so there are many that are not able to reach anyone to let them know they are alive and well."

Red Cross is offering six phone numbers on Aruba where individuals can obtain help in locating family and friends on Haiti. These numbers are:

Dorismaud: 568-0588

Magalie: 568-3136

Jowel: 568-3137

Jean Hilaire: 735-4509

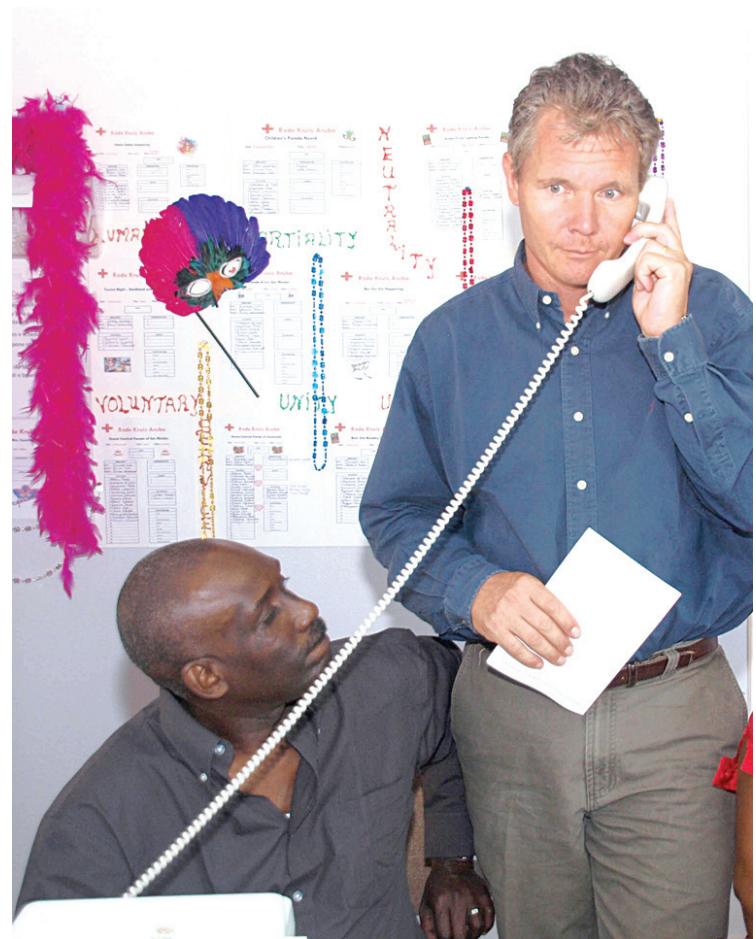
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The Red Cross has direct lines to Haiti to contact their chapter there and obtain information about missing loved ones. Individuals can also visit the Red Cross Headquarters in Dakota with details regarding those on Haiti they cannot reach along with a photo if they have one, and this will help expedite the process.

A call has gone out for clothes and food items to be donated and shipped to Haiti, but Red Cross Interim Director Michel J.M. La Haye discouraged this. "We very much appreciate the generosity of the Aruban community wishing to donate goods, but these things are expensive to send to Haiti," he informed Aruba Today, "what is really needed now is funds.

Continued on Pages B8 & 9



Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino invite all to share their Carnival spirit



The first official parade of Carnival 56 begins tonight with Fakk Optoch, or the Torch Parade, through the streets of Oranjestad. The marketing department of the Stellaris Casino, led by Adolf Everson and Yazira Feliciana, invited all Marriott guests and associates to join them in the Torch Parade as part of the Majestic Group, and to introduce their Caya 101 program during a press

conference in the casino on Thursday evening.

The fee to join the Torch Parade is \$50, which includes a beautiful headpiece from the Majestic Crew, official Caya 101 tee shirt and accessories, dancing through the streets to Impak Band and unlimited bar. Guests have the option of sitting on the sidelines and enjoying a festive evening in a prime spot to watch the parade. The price also includes round-trip transportation from the Marriott Resort in Palm Beach to the parade in Oranjestad. Stellaris Casino members can enjoy a "local" price of 55 Arubian Florins (\$31.50,) or redeem 310 slot points on their card. Inscription for participation is at the VIP desk in the Stellaris Casino from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM today.

Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino will continue the party mood through the following week beginning on January 10, culminating with their giant Caya 101 Party in the Stellaris parking lot on Friday, January 15.

During each day of Caya 101, Stellaris Casino Preferred Players can present their card to receive 4 raffle tickets. During the final grand event, the drawings will begin at 9:30 PM with a total of 5000 Arubian florins (\$2,850) in prizes to be awarded throughout the evening. Those not yet a member of the Stellaris Casino's Preferred Players plan are welcome to sign up in the casino and begin receiving their raffle tickets and benefits immediately.

The Friday night party will begin at 7:30 with a brass band parade featuring stunning carnival



costumes of years gone by and popular island bands Impak, Youth Extreme and Oreo will perform. The evening will also feature a "Guess and Win" contest, and special prices on food and beverages.

Caya 101 offers great fun, cash rewards and a chance to mix and mingle with islanders and share their carnival spirit during the biggest and best party of the year!

Aqua Windie's

Your New Year's Resolution Starts Here



EAGLE BEACH – Tucked away on Eagle Beach is Aqua Windie's, the almost new Swim Center across Horacio Oduber Hospital which represents the life-long dream of Windie and Rene Oude Avenhuis.

In December 2007, Windie & Rene opened their fully-stocked Sport Shop, then they inaugurated their tremendous salt water, half Olympic size pool in August of 2008.

The Swim Center offers a bonanza of 'no sweat, get wet' activities for people of all ages, but the one single activity that is gaining momentum every day is Hydro Riding, and the Aqua Power Classes, both offering spinning on a special bike, immersed in water.

The benefits of Hydro Riding says Windie, a true-blue water baby herself, are too numerous to mention, but above all Hydro Riding provides excellent cardio-vascular exercise and when the Hydro-Tone Water Weight Dumbbells are added for the Aqua Power Class, the workout is complete with total upper and lower body fitness, strengthening all core muscles without an ounce of stress.

Aqua Power instructor Rudy reports that the bike ride, exhilarating by itself, is guaranteed to help shed those holiday pounds, and that Aqua Power is the hottest trend in fitness right now.

Windie adds that Hydro-Riding differs from regular spinning classes, which take place on stationary bikes in an often air-conditioned classroom setting.

At Windie's Swim Center classes take place under the clear Caribbean sky, in the morning and in the evening hours each day, and because of the cool water temperature, bikers can train longer and a typical session lasts 60 full minutes from warm up to cool down.

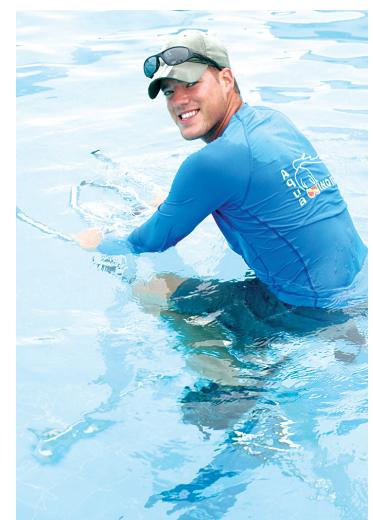
Most of all, not to worry, buoyancy reduces "seat soreness" which is sometimes associated with regular spinning and is easier on



people with lower back problems.

The Joyful, refreshing and recharging classes can burn up to 500-700 calories, and the bikes made from marine steel have a few levels of resistance and adjust easily to body size. Beginners and pro-athletes and anything in between are invited to discover the benefits of Hydro-Riding with Sandy, Roy & Windie. You may stay for breakfast or lunch or an in-between meal at the Aqua Café, on property.

Did we mention Scuba, Padi certification and snorkeling? That is available too. □



Netherlands to send rescue team to Haiti

ST. MAARTEN/HAITI-Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Koenders announced on Wednesday, that the Dutch Government would send two million euros in emergency aid to Haiti along with its Urban Search and Rescue Team to assist in the catastrophe there caused by Tuesday's magnitude 7.0 earthquake. The team consists of 60 people and sniffer dogs to

Dutch man charged over bomb threat

A Dutch man has been charged with making bomb threats on board a transatlantic jet which had to make an emergency landing in Ireland.

Jorge Flores was arrested after allegedly claiming he was carrying an explosive and forcing the flight to land in Shannon on Wednesday.

The 44-year-old, from Limburg in the Netherlands, was on board the Arkefly charter service to Aruba in the Caribbean when the false alarm was raised.

The pilot diverted to Shannon Airport for an emergency landing, evacuation and extensive search of the cabin and hold. The plane was given the all-clear by police late on Wednesday night.

More than 230 holidaymakers and crew were taken off and transferred to a back-up plane to continue their journey to the island of Aruba in the Dutch Antilles.

Flores was remanded in custody at a brief hearing at Ennis District Court in Co Clare on Thursday.

The Courts Service said he was charged under section 43 of the Air Navigation and Transport Act and is due back before the same court for a remand hearing on Friday.

The incident came at a time of heightened airline security after Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab allegedly tried to blow up an airliner on Christmas Day.

He boarded his flight to Detroit in Amsterdam, where security has since been stepped up. □

help identify the thousands of people who still lie buried under the rubble. It is part of a coordinated international aid operation led by the United Nations and departed from Eindhoven Airport on Wednesday night with a transport plane made available by the Defence Ministry. The two million in emergency aid was paid from the Dutch Development budget. Considering the scale of the tragedy in Haiti, Minister Koenders decided to make the funds available.

Prime Minister Emily de Jongh-Elhage, on behalf of the Government of the Netherlands Antilles, is encouraging persons who have relatives in Haiti with Dutch nationality to contact the Bureau of Foreign Affairs by calling (09) 461-3933 in Curaçao to give or request information about their relatives.

According to a press statement from the local Government Information Service (GIS), persons should ask for R. May or S. Nicolaas when calling the Bureau of Foreign Affairs. Insel Air General and

GIS explained that specific telephone numbers had been assigned and broken down into two groups that persons could call to register their names and to provide information about relatives in Haiti.

Haitian residents in the Netherlands Antilles without Dutch nationality should contact the Haitian Consulate in Willemstad, Curaçao, at (09) 461-3434 and ask for Interim Consul General Renan Chery or Vice Consul Jean Claude Selime.

GIS also noted that the Dutch Embassy in the Dominican Republic was involved in the coordination of a possible air- or sealift out of Haiti of persons from the Netherlands Antilles who might now be stranded in Haiti due to the disaster.

Airline company Insel Air, a national carrier for Haiti, has announced the cancellation of all flights to Haiti until a sufficient degree of security can be provided. The airline usually flies from Miami, St. Maarten and Curaçao to Port-au-Prince.

Insel Air General and



Minister Koenders

International Affairs Director Edward Heerenveen said the airline company was ready to contribute to the reconstruction

of Haiti with transportation of relief supplies and collection of monetary contributions during flights. □

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Staying Off the Blacklist: FATF Criticism Prompts Government Action Plan

Blacklisting and Approval

In 2000 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) identified a number of jurisdictions as tax havens, which led to Aruba being placed on the OECD's blacklist.

Between 2000 and April 2009, a total of 31 jurisdictions created formal standards of transparency and exchange of information. In May 2009 the OECD's Committee on Fiscal Affairs decided to remove the three remaining jurisdictions - Andorra, Nauru and Vanuatu - from the list of uncooperative tax havens in the light of their commitments to implement OECD standards of

transparency and effective exchange of information. As a result, there is no committee blacklist at present.

Aruba made a commitment to abolish the Aruba exempt company regime with effect from December 31 2007.

The regime was abolished and a new form of Aruba exempt company was introduced with effect from January 1 2006. Rather than the company itself enjoying tax exemption, only certain qualifying activities are exempt from profit tax and dividend withholding tax. In early 2009 Aruba found itself on the so-called 'grey list' because it had too few exchange of information

treaties with other countries, but on September 10 2009 it was announced that Aruba was no longer on either OECD list. Aruba has signed exchange of information treaties with Australia, the British Virgin Islands, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, St Kitts & Nevis, St Vincent, Spain, Sweden and the United States.

In addition, treaties with Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, France and Germany will be signed soon, while negotiations have started with Mexico, Italy, New Zealand and Monaco. Aruba has a tax treaty with the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles.

However, there are dark clouds on the horizon for Aruba.

Outlook

A communiqué from the Pittsburgh G-20 Summit in September 2009 stated that:

"We [the G-20 nations] stand ready to use countermeasures against tax havens from March 2010. We welcome the progress made by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing and call upon the FATF to issue a public list of high-risk jurisdictions by February 2010."

Thus, a new blacklist is in the making and will probably appear in February 2010.

In October 2009 the FATF presented a report on

anti-money laundering and combating terrorism financing which criticized Aruba's regime, particularly its lack of transparency. An FATF meeting is planned for February 2010, but if Aruba can show that it is serious about complying with the FATF's standards, it may yet avoid the new blacklist.

which aims to ensure that Aruba complies with the FATF in future. The plan runs to over 300 pages, but its main proposals, if enacted, would:

abolish the Aruba exempt company (while allowing the venootschap met beperkte aansprakelijkheid - a form of limited liability company - to carry out the qualifying exempt activities);

criminalize terrorism financing as an independent offence;

replace the existing legislation on identification and money laundering with new legislation in line with FATF standards;

allow the Central Bank of Aruba to act as the reporting office for unusual transactions; and prohibit electronic stock exchanges.

Comment

The international status of so-called offshore centres can change quickly: on a blacklist one day, in compliance the next.

However, even if a jurisdiction is deemed to be compliant, it must be prepared for abrupt changes to the rules.

Therefore, the Aruban government has chosen to make rigorous changes to the existing system. □

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Action Plan

The government has prepared an action plan

Louis Vuitton donates \$100,000 to Haiti



LOUIS VUITTON

Oranjestad – Louis Vuitton has expressed a great deal of concern due to the recent earthquake that hit Port Au Prince , Haiti on January 12.

Being one of the world's leading companies of luxury products since 1854, Louis Vuitton, with its 446 stores situated in 62 countries around the world,



has decided to contribute to the Red Cross of Haiti. On behalf of all its employees, Louis Vuitton will donate the amount of \$100,000 dollars in medical supplies, water purification systems, food and water. □

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**** **HUMAN HINTS** ***

Guilt Release - Dissolve Your Mental Prison

Our inability to forgive ourselves is one of the main obstacles we face as Evolving Humans. Guilt can completely eliminate our growth and as life progresses, we accumulate more and more of the emotional quicksand. We naturally accumulate guilt as our lives progress. If we don't know how to use it and properly release it, our guilt will become a stagnant, virus-ridden pond, impossible to cross.

We feel responsible for our actions, so when things

don't go well, we feel guilty. We hesitate the next time a similar situation arises. If we let it, guilt can freeze our action, so it is important to understand this crippling force. We must learn to release our guilt and forgive ourselves for things we did in the past.

We were not the same people back then. Our past selves are vastly different than who we are in the present. We were under different external forces in life, different internal hormonal forces, and at a different stage of personal

development. It is over now. Only the present can change the past and define the future.

If you've done things that make you ashamed, act differently in the present. Your actions in every Now Moment can change the past. The physical events of the past will not change, but the energy behind past events is completely malleable. Your present energy patterns alter the energy of your past. You change your past by changing your Now. Let go of regret by acting

differently.

Think of it this way. Whoever you hurt in the past, sacrificed them selves to teach you a lesson. If you learn the lesson, you will now bestow good energy onto those who need it. The good energy from the lesson learned negates the bad energy you once inflicted in order to learn the lesson.

Forgiving your self will release your guilt, which will allow you complete freedom of expression. Unhindered by fear, you will move freely as you wish. Guilt imprisons your free will. When you release your guilt, you set your free will free.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger
Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

Guilt traps us in a prison that we create in our mind. It slows and restricts our thoughts and movements. It manipulates our viewpoint in order to incite our emotions.

We become frozen in fear.

The prison dissolves when we learn to forgive ourselves.

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Negra which we import directly from Andalucía. As your main course you could choose our Paella, traditionally prepared on the spot by our chef! Combine this Spanish dish with our home-made sangria to complete your dinner.

Of course we saved the best for last as no one does an ending better than Casa Tua with their dreamy Tiramisu. If you're into something different we suggest tasting the Espresso Martini Cocktail as dessert, you won't be disappointed.

The best part about such a good ending is that it guarantees you'll be back for more...



Casa Tua Barcelona Downtown open from 11.30am to 10.30pm, Sunday from 5pm to 11pm tel. 588 5695. Casa Tua Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm, tel 586 8470

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THE MUST-SEE SHOW - YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT! AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK, Adam Steinfeld: 'MAGIC LIVE!', from Monte Carlo, Hong Kong, Orlando, Miami Beach, Biloxi, Boston, San Juan, New York, Aruba to Vegas, it's the coolest show in town, taking up where Houdini left off."
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Where: Westin - Aruba, palm beach (high-rise area)
Who: starring, comedy illusionist, Adam Steinfeld
Time: 9:00 pm, theater opens at 8:30pm
Tickets: at the door
Price: \$19.95 under 15, \$29.5 adults
Group Sales: 561-1090
website: www.MagicLive.com
Blog: www.MagicOnTheBeach.com



Haitian help desk at Red Cross Headquarters

Continued from Page B1

We have set up special accounts which will be administrated by the Red Cross; these funds will purchase what is needed in Haiti, which will also help stimulate their economy."

These accounts are under the name of "Help Haiti Red Cross."

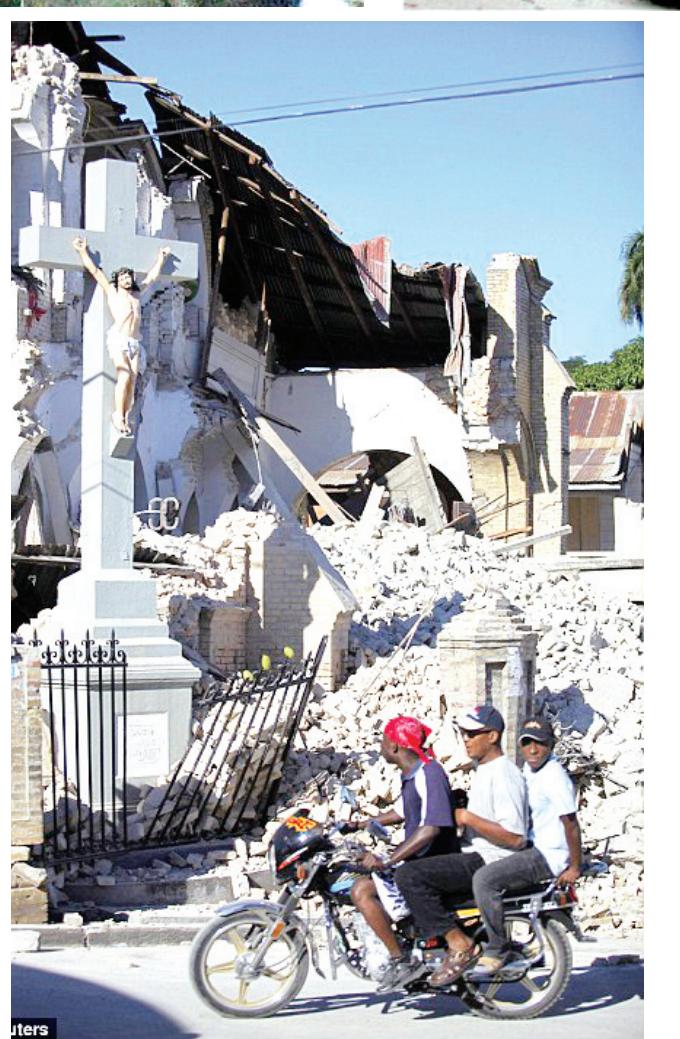
The numbers are: RBTT Bank: 4425510, CMB Bank: 60646004, Banco di Caribe: 81009401, Aruba



Bank: 12012010.

It is not unknown for unprincipled individuals to take advantage of such situations and set up foundations where money can be donated, but little is seen by those in need.

News reports have been warning of this, and recommend all those wishing to help exercise caution and make their donations to recognized crisis organizations such as the Red Cross. □



Help us so we can help our brothers and sisters in need

Relief teams helping Haiti's traumatized quake victims



HMCS Athabaskan heads past Georges Island as it heads out of the harbor in Halifax, Canada on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010. The warship is heading to earthquake-ravaged Haiti to assist in the relief operation and expects to arrive early next week.

(AP Photo/Andrew Vaughan, The Canadian Press)

Port-au-Prince/Sao Paulo - A mammoth relief operation slowly picked up Thursday in a race against time to help survivors of the earthquake that devastated the Haiti capital of Port-au-Prince. Relief teams were distributing small quantities of food as thousands of hungry and traumatized residents wandered aimlessly through the streets of the city of 1.9 million.

The capital and its surroundings were the areas hardest hit by the powerful 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck the impoverished Caribbean country on Tuesday afternoon.

Relief workers spoke of chaotic conditions and a crippled infrastructure that made it difficult to reach people trapped under the rubble of hundreds of buildings destroyed by the quake.

The true scale of the disaster remained unclear, with the government of the Caribbean nation speaking of up to 100,000 feared dead and one-third of 9 million population in need of assistance.

'Food distribution started yesterday,' said Charles Vincent of the World Food Programme, 'and today will start in Port-au-Prince.'

Speaking in Geneva, Vincent admitted that the food going to several thousand people was a 'drop in the ocean,' but said aid efforts were being stepped up as supplies flow into the country.

'All staff there in Haiti are exhausted,' said Vincent, adding that they continued

to work through the night to improve the relief efforts.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization said eight hospitals were damaged or destroyed in Haiti and two others in the neighboring Dominican Republic were damaged as well.

'This was already an especially vulnerable population so it is a particularly devastating impact,' said Paul Garwood with the WHO, warning of disease spreads as the water supply was damaged.

Some 100 members of the United Nations' staff were still missing, many believed to be buried under rubble. A Filipino UN peacekeeper trapped in a collapsed hotel was rescued Thursday.

Three other Filipino peacekeepers were still believed trapped in the second floor of the Christopher Hotel, the headquarters of the United Nations Stabilization Mission.

The first European rescue teams arrived Thursday. 'Teams from the French Antilles will start search and rescue operations as soon as possible,' said the EU executive in Brussels.

Additional teams are expected to arrive on Thursday from Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Britain and Iceland, which, though not yet an EU member, contributes to the bloc's civil protection mechanisms.

Italy, Belgium and France have medical teams on their way, while a EU assessment and coordination team is travelling to Haiti on a Belgian plane.



Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper (R) makes a donation to the Canadian Red Cross as aid for the Haiti earthquake with his wife Laureen in Ottawa January 14, 2010.

REUTERS/Chris Wattie

Commission spokeswoman Barbara Helfferich announced that additional aid had been pledged by Germany, Spain, Sweden, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Non-EU member Norway is also involved in the operations.

A 220-member Israeli team of medical and rescue experts was due to depart Thursday to help out with the recovery and treatment of quake victims. The military has leased two Boeing 747s of the El Al Israeli airline company to transport the mission, which includes a search and rescue unit of



Military personal from HMCS Halifax take on supplies as other crew members try and exit the ship on Thursday, January 14, 2010 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. HMCS Halifax and Athabaskan have left Halifax for Haiti loaded with provisions to help in the international earthquake relief effort.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/
Mike Dembeck



Jordanian military officers leave with humanitarian aid and supplies to be sent to earthquake-ravaged Haiti, at Amman airport January 14, 2010. Jordan is sending 6 tons of humanitarian aid to earthquake-ravaged Haiti and will dispatch a field hospital to Haiti to help treat the wounded. Troops and planeloads of food and medicine streamed into Haiti on Thursday to aid a traumatized nation still rattled by aftershocks from the catastrophic earthquake that flattened homes and government buildings and buried countless people.

REUTERS/Muhammad Hamed

the Israeli military, a field hospital, police experts, and medics of Israel's equivalent of the Red Cross.

Britain on Thursday announced an aid package of 6.15 million pounds (10 million dollars) to help kick-start the relief effort.

Some of the money would be used back the relief programme launched by the International Federation of the Red Cross while the rest would be used to provide water, sanitation, food and shelter for the earthquake victims, International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander said.

Meanwhile, France said it has stopped deporting illegal immigrants from Haiti because of the earthquake. President Nicolas Sarkozy was due to meet with his government

later Thursday to discuss the situation and decide on additional aid.

France has already deployed several military transport planes and dozens of rescue workers to the capital Port-au-Prince, which appears to have suffered most of the damage.

The French foreign ministry said 50 French nationals were thought to be missing in Haiti. An estimated 1,500 French citizens were living in the former French colony, most of them in Port-au-Prince. The International Committee of the Red Cross launched a programme and website to help families in Haiti locate missing relatives.

'The aim of the family links website is to accelerate the process of restoring contact between separated family members,' the ICRC said. □



A Mexican Red Cross worker loads humanitarian aid leaving for Haiti at the Mexican Red Cross building in Mexico City, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010. The International Red Cross and other aid groups say they are preparing a major disaster relief effort in Haiti after a powerful earthquake struck the capital.

(AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

Relief efforts underway for Haiti quake victims

PHILIPSBURG--Efforts are being made by various local volunteer organisations to assist the thousands of victims of the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that devastated Haiti on Tuesday evening.

At the moment, organisations are requesting primarily monetary donations for a quick response, while the donation of non-perishable items and first aid items is also welcomed.

For monetary donations, the United Haitian Community (UHC) has given Windward Islands Bank account numbers 800-752-07 (US\$) and 800-751-09 (NAf.). Buddhist compassionate relief Tzu Chi Foundation St. Maarten has Windward Islands Bank US dollar account number 219-322-01 and the Haitian United Teachers Association has RBTT US dollar account 403-328-45.

UHC's intention is to send some of its people to Haiti within two weeks with the gathered funds. According to UHC President Castin Ironce, it is quite difficult to fly into Haiti, much less to send containers of items. He said local airline Insel Air had guaranteed them free passage to Haiti.

Once in Haiti, Ironce said, the UHC members will shop for the necessary items and rent a truck to distribute them to individuals who are in real need of basic necessities. In Haiti, the association will also aim to establish contact with a relief group to which it can ship containers of items at a later time.

The Haitian United Teachers Association also intends to send some of its members to Haiti with the funds and non-perishable items it collects. Tzu Chi Foundation said it had lost contact with its main contact, the Chinese Embassy in Haiti, as the embassy building had collapsed. Therefore, sending non-perishable items is not possible at the moment. However, Tzu Chi is still calling on the local community to make monetary contributions. It is preparing donation containers that will be placed in various supermarkets and schools. Clothes and food are welcomed for the foundation to prepare containers that will be sent to Haiti at the moment adequate contact is made with relief organisations there. The committee to re-elect Rodolphe Samuel, in sympathy with the people of Haiti, has made a container available at Samuel's Bakery (Magarita's Supermarket) in Middle Region to collect items like non-perishable food products, water, clothes, shoes, tarpaulins, tents, generators, etc. When the container is filled it will be donated to the Salvation Army in Haiti.

Love of Kids Foundation is also organising the collection of children's clothes and dry goods to be delivered to the Red Cross and subsequently to Haiti. The foundation is calling on businesses to place signs in their establishments and be "drop zones" to collect goods on behalf of Love of Kids.

Worker's Institute for Organised Labour (WIFOL) President Theophilus Thompson said the organisation had established a solidarity corner in its building so anyone who would like to donate goods or cash to the victims in Haiti could do so. Contributions will be forwarded to the Haitian community.

Thompson extended condolences to the Haitian community in St. Maarten, especially the members of WIFOL who might be affected by this tragedy. He said WIFOL would do whatever was possible to help relieve hardship the Haitian community might encounter.

UHC President Ironce noted that Tuesday's earthquake had come as a shock to the local Haitian community and said UHC was doing all in its power to mobilise relief to its people. He thanked the local community in advance for its contributions and asked for continued prayers for the people of Haiti.

To contact UHC, President Ironce can be reached at tel. 524-4719, UHC Secretary Roland Lamour at 554-2973 and association advisor Celestin Jean Pierre at 554-1733.

The Haitian United Teachers Association, which comprises a group of teachers at St. Maarten Academy PSVE, can be contacted at the school at tel. 548-4821. Teachers Bonhomme Antoine can be contacted at 553-0079, Lovely Antoine at 553-0328 and David Edouard at 580-0056. □

Fishermen stage protest, block Anguilla ferries

MARIGOT—French-side fishermen blocked the entry channel at the Sandy Ground bridge with a string of buoys early Wednesday morning and prevented Anguilla ferries from approaching the ferries terminal on the Marigot waterfront in a protest over rights of St. Martin fishermen to fish in Anguilla waters. The protest began at 5:00am and was due to end at 5:30pm. Fishermen at the Sandy Ground bridge said there was no restriction on tourists in pleasure craft entering or exiting the lagoon, the blockade only applying to Anguilla vessels.

Association des Pêcheurs Saint-Martinois (AMPSM) President Tony Page had warned on Tuesday that the protest would take place to draw attention to the change in "attitude" of the Anguilla authorities that he said had disrupted the previously harmonious existence between the two islands over fishing that has lasted 30 years.

St. Martin fishermen, including Page, said the Anguilla Coast Guard had turned them back if they were not in possession of licences to fish. Two St. Martin fishermen reportedly have been fined by Anguilla authorities.

"Anguilla fishermen can come over to St. Martin to sell their fish and lobster in the market and buy gasoline and diesel because it is cheaper here, but we cannot go over there to fish. That's a big problem," said one fisherman.

When the first ferry leaving Anguilla, Ocean Three, was denied entry to the port in Marigot, an emergency meeting was convened between a Government delegation from Anguilla and local authorities in St. Martin to resolve the issue. The meeting was held in the Hotel de la Collectivité and chaired by President Frantz Gumbs. A number of French- and Dutch-side fishermen, including Page, attended.

According to a release from the Anguilla Government, it transpired that the St. Martin fishermen were reacting to an incident that had happened on Tuesday January 5. In that incident, a fisherman from St. Martin was told by officers of the Marine Division of the Royal Anguilla Police Force not to fish in Anguilla waters without a valid licence.

"The fisherman was under the impression there was some unwritten agreement whereby French fishermen are allowed to fish in Anguilla waters without the appropriate licence, hence the unofficial blockage of the port a week later," the release stated.

The Anguilla delegation acknowledged that Anguilla and St. Martin had always had a good longstanding relationship in areas of transport, commerce, and maritime and fishing matters. However, it reminded, "There is a need for persons to adhere to all legal requirements when they are in the territorial waters of

Anguilla."

The delegation also stressed the need for Anguilla to protect its marine resources for the benefit of Anguillians while recognising the traditional relationship with fishermen from St. Martin and St. Maarten.

It was agreed at the meeting the port should be opened immediately and this was done at 12:15pm. It was also agreed that indigenous fishermen from St. Martin and St. Maarten would adhere to Anguilla's legal requirements to fish in the waters of Anguilla, including obtaining the appropriate licences and permissions.

The Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources in Anguilla and its counterpart organisation in St. Martin will collaborate to ensure that issues are resolved in a timely and amicable manner.

The release further stated that indigenous fishermen from St. Martin would be granted one month to apply to the Department of Fisheries and Maritime Resources for the appropriate licences. The licences issued to the local St. Martin fishermen will be for line fishing for pelagic fish species only (dolphin fish, wahoo, tuna, etc.) and they will not be allowed to set fish traps targeting lobsters, crayfish, and reef fish.

Page was not immediately available to comment on the outcome of the meeting. □

Foundations, associations now have to pay yearly fees

~ Offshore companies must be registered ~

P H I L I P S B U R G -- Associations and foundations will no longer enjoy an exemption when they register every year at the St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce and Industry. A law passed in Parliament in September 2009 now makes it mandatory for associations and foundations in St. Maarten, Saba and Statia to pay an annual registration fee at the St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as is the case with businesses. Associations and foundations will also have to declare and verify their non-profit status by registering at the Tax Department. This information will have to be updated annually. Under the new regulation, which had been pending since 2004 before its approval last year, businesses and associations will now fall under the same registry as all categories of businesses, re-elected Chamber President Glen Carty and Vice President Ludwig Ouenniche said. □

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**Jet fuel shortage leads to rationing at airport**

AIRPORT--A shortage of jet fuel in St. Maarten has resulted in rationing at the Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) seriously affecting the operations of private jets primarily. David Antrobus of SOL Petroleum explained that the shortage of fuel is expected to be solved by the weekend with the arrival of two tankers containing Jet A1 over the next two days, one at the Sol terminal this morning and other at Chevron terminal on Friday. Until receipt and recertification of the fuel on board these tankers, priority is being given to commercial airlines.

The Daily Herald understands that while no commercial aircraft were affected, a number of private jets had to fly to Antigua to be fuelled. Additionally, usually reliable sources indicated that at least one major private jet company is actively making arrangements to go elsewhere in the region. Antrobus said there is a shortage of jet fuel in the region which could be attributed to the annual closing of the Point a Pierre refinery, located in South Trinidad, Trinidad and Tobago, to undergo an annual maintenance

shutdown from December 28 to January 4 and the high sea swells in the region which have led to tanker delays. This has restricted supplies so that the last tanker load of Jet A1 was cut by Sol's suppliers at the load port in line with the rationing of jet fuel across the region.

He said a tanker is expected in today at the Sol Terminal at 6:00am and the fuel samples for recertification will be flown by charter to Antigua to ensure recertification is received before the afternoon rush period at PJIA. Antrobus said, barring any unforeseen circumstances, operations should be back to normal in the weekend and from as early as mid-afternoon on Friday.

Regarding fuel reserves, Antrobus explained that SOL and Chevron are restricted in their storage capacity on the island and at PJIA. He said SOL is seriously looking to expand its Cole Bay storage facility with additional fuel storage here sometime towards the end of 2010 depending on early receipt of planning permissions for the application which will shortly be submitted to the authorities. □

Financial Intelligence Unit will be functional in March

COLE BAY-St. Maarten branch of the Netherlands Antilles Financial Intelligence Unit MOT is set to open in Puerto del Sol Plaza in March. A senior legal counsel and a secretary will be initially stationed permanently here while MOT Head Kenneth Dambruck will be here every two weeks. The office was symbolically opened by Finance Minister Ersilia de Lannooy and Leader of Government Commissioner William Marlin in July 2009 but had been vacant since then. Dambruck said that some NAF. 200,000 was allotted for the St. Maarten unit to outfit the space with furniture, wiring for computer system and other essentials. The reason the set-up of the unit's operations has taken so long, he explained, is because the funds, although approved by the Central Government, were not readily available for the unit. Personnel are also being sought for the unit's operations in St. Maarten. The central unit in Curaçao

has 14 people and approval has been given for another seven people to be hired there. Although the unit here is not functioning as yet, St. Maarten has already been introduced to the Caribbean as a new member, so to speak, of financial monitoring. A training course, for unusual transaction reporters of units in the Caribbean and as far away as Nigeria, was held here in July 2009. "We did the course here to introduce St. Maarten as a new unit," he said. The branch should be fully equipped to run independently when country St. Maarten is established on 10-10-10. Dambruck commended the support the MOT has had in the execution of its duties here. He singled out Stanley Kwidama, who is assisting with the set-up of the justice chain for country St. Maarten, Julian Lake of the Control Department and Michael Dijkhoffz of government's IT department for their cooperation and assistance to set-up the unit. □

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STU	WK 4	ROOM 2108	P.V.	\$ 14.000
1BR	WK 4	ROOM 2105	P.V.	\$ 17.000
1BR	WK 4/9	ROOM 4226	P.V.	\$ 14.000 PW
STU	WK 4/9	ROOM 4225	P.V.	\$ 12.000 PW
STU	WK 51/52	ROOM 4207	P.V.	\$ 10.000 PW
2BR	WK 5	ROOM 2222/2223	P.V.	\$ 25.000

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2BR	WK 52/1	ROOM 229	O.F.	\$ 40.000
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1BR	WK 1/2	ROOM 222	P.O.	\$ 13.000 PW
1BR	WK 3/4/5/6	ROOM 221	P.O.	\$ 13.000 PW
2BR	WK 4	ROOM 129	O.F.	\$ 22.000
2BR	WK 4	ROOM 305	P.O.	\$ 15.000
1BR	WK 1	ROOM 227	O.F.	\$ 17.000
2BR	WK 2	ROOM 207	P.O.	\$ 15.000

Latinoamérica se une ante el drama que vive Haití

BRASILIA (AP) - Colombia puso a disposición una base naval y un aeropuerto en el Caribe para facilitar las labores humanitarias, Cuba envió más de 400 médicos y Brasil más de 28 toneladas de alimentos para paliar la grave crisis que vive Haití tras el terremoto del martes.

Ninguno de los países se quedó al margen del esfuerzo y han abierto centros de acopio o han enviado brigadas entrenadas en desastres naturales para el rescate de sobrevivientes, remoción de escombros y atención a los damnificados. El secretario general de la OEA, José Miguel Insulza, dijo el jueves durante una visita a Panamá que a dos días del sismo "la situación es desoladora" y se "necesita toda la ayuda. Hay todavía mucha gente bajo los escombros, hay mucha destrucción, hay mucha gente sin casa, sin alimentos, sin medicinas".

Algunas naciones de la región han sido afectadas directamente por la tragedia. Brasil: 15 muertos muertos y 5 desaparecidos; República Dominicana: 4 muertos; México: 1 muerto; Costa Rica: 5 desaparecidos; Chile: 2 desaparecidos y Uruguay: 1 desaparecido.

También hay buenas noticias como la confirmación de que una hermana de la senadora colombiana Piedad Córdova, dada por desaparecida, sobrevivió al sismo, según informó el jefe del contingente policial colombiano en Haití Santiago Carmelo.

La directora de Servicio Exterior de Costa Rica, Carmen Claramunt, dijo el jueves que han sido localizados 11 costarricenses que sus familiares reportaron que se encontraban en la isla, pero continúan desaparecidos cinco ticos que trabajan con diferentes ONG.

Brasil encabeza la Misión de Paz de las Naciones Unidas



Bomberos brasileños parten rumbo a Haití desde una base aérea de Rio de Janeiro, el jueves 14 de enero de 2010. Los esfuerzos mundiales de llevar alivio están en camino tres el terremoto de 7 grados que golpeó el país caribeño el martes. (AP Foto/Felipe Dana)

(Minustah) en Haití con 1.266 soldados. Perdió a 14 de sus hombres y continúa desaparecido el subjefe del contingente de la ONU, el brasileño Luiz Carlos da Costa. También murió una pediatra brasileña que había llegado a la isla para dar una conferencia.

El ministro de Defensa de Brasil, Nelson Jobim, se trasladó a Haití para coordinar personalmente el inicio de un plan de emergencia de emergencia para enfrentar los

cincos problemas más graves detectados por las autoridades: entierro de los muertos, socorro a los heridos, remoción de escombros, refuerzo de seguridad de las operaciones y distribución de alimentos y agua.

En Santiago de Chile se informó el jueves que se continúa sin noticias de María Teresa Dowling, esposa del general Ricardo Toro, asignado a las fuerzas de paz en Haití, y de Andrea Loi, colaboradora de Minustah.

El ministerio de Defensa colombiano informó el jueves en un comunicado que para facilitar la operación humanitaria de terceros países hacia Haití puso a disposición una base naval en el Caribe colombiano y el aeropuerto internacional en Barranquilla, a unos 700 kilómetros al norte de Bogotá.

Agregó que también envió dos aviones con equipos de rescate de la policía y perros adiestrados para encontrar sobrevivientes, una planta

de procesamiento de agua, una hospital de campaña, 14 toneladas de alimentos y 600 kilos de medicamentos. La ayuda será coordinada por el ministro del Interior, Fabio Valencia, que viajó el jueves. Cuba desplegó a casi 400 médicos en Haití, indicaron fuentes del gobierno, que incluye a la Brigada Médica "Henry Reeve", creada por el ex presidente Fidel Castro para brindar ayuda solidaria profesional ante desastres naturales. También enviaron abastecimientos, medicamentos y sueros.

La organización privada costarricense "Un techo para mi país" anunció que enviará voluntarios para arrancar con la construcción de 100 casas temporales para damnificados.

Una brigada humanitaria de 32 soldados del Ejército de Nicaragua viajó el jueves a Haití para prestar servicios médicos y de rescate, mientras Honduras mandó unos 20 médicos forenses y bomberos expertos en la búsqueda de personas soterradas. El presidente de Panamá Ricardo Martinelli anunció su país enviará un avión que llevará un equipo de 20 rescatistas, unas 10.000 bolsas de alimentos y medicinas. □

Impotencia y angustia de comunidad haitiana en Dominicana

SANTO DOMINGO (AP) - El embajador de Haití, Fritz Cineas, no contuvo el jueves las lágrimas al hablar sobre la tragedia en su país, mientras su voz denotó la impotencia y la angustia por no poder informar a sus compatriotas residentes en Dominicana sobre la situación de sus familiares. En el Pequeño Haití, un barrio capitalino en el que vive la mayor concentración de haitianos en la capital dominicana, reinaba la desesperación por la falta de comunicación. República Dominicana, como vecino más cercano, fue el primer país que acudió en ayuda de los haitianos tras el terremoto del martes. Cuatro dominicanos fueron confirmados el jueves como fallecidos durante el sismo: Luis Bolívar y Manuel Lora Acosta, José

Rafael Medina y Guillermo Peña, quienes trabajaban en territorio dominicano. Las autoridades locales no han establecido el número de desaparecidos. Se calcula que en Haití residen más de 25.000 dominicanos. "Otra vez la República Dominicana ha dado muestra de gran solidaridad", manifestó Cineas con lágrimas en los ojos y sin poder continuar las palabras ante los periodistas.

El gobierno envió agua, alimentos y personal médico y de socorro. Al menos 2.000 personas han sido atendidas en hospitales dominicanos, entre ellos el presidente del Senado de Haití, Kelly Bestien. Decenas de haitianos que viven en República Dominicana acuden a diferentes hospitales en busca de

identificar familiares. Yeni Pierre, una mujer de 35 años que se dedica al transporte de mercancías para comercializarlas en Santo Domingo, lloraba incesantemente porque no ha podido saber del paradero de dos de sus tres hijas. Muchos haitianos no saben cuándo podrán regresar a su país y saber de sus familiares, debido a la falta de dinero o transporte para costear el viaje. Gary Stflou comentó en el Pequeño Haití que "es una situación muy difícil, todavía nosotros no sabemos quién murió, quién está grave o quién desapareció". Al menos un millón de haitiano vive de manera ilegal en territorio dominicano y trabajan en agricultura y labores domésticas. □

Chávez suspende racionamiento de energía eléctrica en Caracas

CARACAS (Reuters) - El presidente Hugo Chávez decidió el miércoles a medianoche suspender un controversial racionamiento de electricidad en Caracas al admitir que el plan generó inconvenientes, y pidió la renuncia al ministro de Energía Eléctrica.

Horas antes, el militar retirado con 11 años en el poder había defendido a capa y espada los planes de ahorro de energía mediante cortes de luz de cuatro horas cada dos días, tras acusar a los Gobiernos que lo precedieron y a la falta de lluvias por la crisis de energía. "He ordenado suspender los cortes eléctricos" únicamente en Caracas, dijo el presidente en un contacto telefónico con el canal estatal VTV al agregar que ha habido "impactos no deseados". Dijo que en el interior del país el plan de racionamiento continuará porque "marcha de manera correcta el plan" y que lo de Caracas se va a limitar y revisar.



Un hombre compra productos en un supermercado durante un apagón, en Caracas, 13 ene 2010. El presidente Hugo Chávez decidió el miércoles a medianoche suspender un controversial racionamiento de electricidad en Caracas al admitir que el plan generó inconvenientes, y pidió la renuncia al ministro de Energía Eléctrica. REUTERS/Edwin Montilva

El presidente afirmó que le solicitó la dimisión al ministro Angel Rodríguez, que había sido designado hace poco para

tomar las riendas de la crisis de energía y la dramática baja del embalse del Guri, del que depende el 73 por ciento de la energía hidroeléctrica que motoriza al país.

Venezuela inició el miércoles el plan de racionamiento de electricidad en medio de una gran confusión entre la

al tiempo que periódicos comparaban la situación con la que vivió Cuba hace años.

La medida también llevó a una reprogramación de eventos como la final de la serie nacional de béisbol, el deporte principal del país, mientras que algunas personas quedaron atrapadas en los ascensores y otros vieron interrumpidas súbitamente sus compras.

Autoridades han alertado que se espera que la sequía se mantenga por unos cinco meses y que de no hacerse el racionamiento, el país podría entrar en un colapso eléctrico desde finales de febrero.

El país petrolero está azotado por una recesión económica y alta inflación, además de continuos apagones y cortes de agua, lo que ha afectado la popularidad de Chávez, quien busca instaurar un Estado socialista que contrasta con el gusto consumista de la nación. El déficit eléctrico se calcula en un 12 por ciento, equivalente a 1.669 megavatios (MW), lo que ha causado frecuentes y prolongados apagones, especialmente en el interior del país y lo que ha desatado la furia de pobladores, que suelen bloquear carreteras en protesta. □

Venezuela y Siria estrechan relaciones

CARACAS (AP) - El presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez se reunió el miércoles con el ministro de Comunicación de Siria, Mohsen Bilal, para evaluar el estado de las relaciones y los avances de la cooperación de ambos países en materia energética, comunicaciones, agricultura y comercio.

El canciller venezolano Nicolás Maduro alabó la visita del ministro sirio por considerar que fue "muy productivo" el encuentro que se realizó en el palacio de gobierno de Caracas. Bilal, por su parte, catalogó la reunión con el líder izquierdista venezolano como un "día histórico" y acotó que hizo entrega a Chávez de una misiva y un fraternal saludo de su par sirio Bashar Al-Assad.

En Venezuela nos "encontrarnos con hermanos, luchadores para el progreso, prosperidad, socialismo, independencia, derechos humanos de los pueblos, para la autodeterminación", dijo Bilal, citado por la agencia estatal de noticias ABN.

El líder sudamericano ha establecido vínculos estrechos con Siria, Irán y otros países del Medio Oriente, mientras que sus relaciones con Israel se han vuelto tensas. Repetidamente Chávez ha dicho que el estado judío debería devolver a Siria las colinas de Golán que capturó en la guerra de 1967. □

Congreso hondureño declara diputado vitalicio a Micheletti

TEGUCIGALPA (AP) - El congreso condecoró el miércoles por la noche al presidente de facto Roberto Micheletti y le confirió el título de "diputado vitalicio" por haber sido reelegido siete veces congresista por 28 años, desde 1981.

Además, calificó a Micheletti, quien tomó el poder en Honduras tras el golpe de Estado que derrocó a Manuel Zelaya el año pasado, como "gran hombre y gran ciudadano de Honduras". La legislatura le otorgó a Micheletti la condecoración del congreso en su grado de gran cruz extraordinaria.

En una ceremonia especial, el presidente del poder legislativo José Saavedra dijo que Micheletti "se ha destacado por su inspiración democrática, liderazgo natural y respeto a la constitución y las leyes", y que "bajo su liderazgo se mantuvo la paz en el país".

En su discurso, Micheletti aseguró que "ha sido triste y doloroso soportar a los gobiernos y personajes que siguen acosándome, pero hice lo correcto, lo legal y lo legítimo... y siempre me acompañó el pueblo". "Al final se impuso el buen juicio y la razón... y ya se está dando la reincorporación de Honduras en el consorcio de las naciones", añadió.

Su comentario fue una aparente alusión al hecho que la Organización de Estados Americanos retiró a Honduras de su seno luego del derrocamiento del 28 de junio, cuando los militares arrestaron y enviaron al exilio a Costa Rica a Zelaya.

En esa fecha, el congreso designó a Micheletti en reemplazo de Zelaya, quien retornó subrepticiamente el 21 de septiembre a Tegucigalpa y se refugió en la embajada de Brasil, donde aún se encuentra. □

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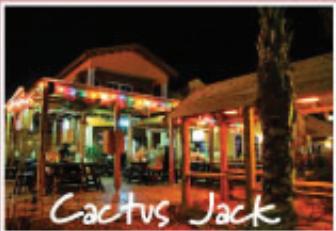


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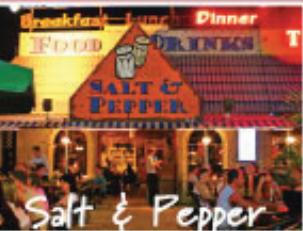
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